

National Canadian Pharmacare: Pros, Cons, and Challenges

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Presentation Description:

Canada is known around the world for our universal healthcare. However, there are significant gaps in our coverage, specifically, the exclusion of the coverage of prescription medications, also known as pharmacare. This paper discusses the evidence supporting and opposing pharmacare, and the potential challenges we may face to implement such a program.

Abstract:

While Canada is known as a leader in global healthcare due to our universal medical coverage, there is a large gap in our current program; Canada is the only country in the world with universal health care that excludes prescription coverage. There is extensive evidence supporting the establishment of a national pharmacare program, such as expanded job opportunities and reductions in prescription medication costs nationally, but there are also limitations to such a program. Concerns with overprescribing, reduction in the variety of available medications, and variable support from Canadians, require careful consideration of this issue from all angles when seeking to implement this program. In addition to these concerns, there are various challenges that would arise if such a program were to be implemented. These include the logistics of a national pharmacare program in our country where healthcare is a provincial jurisdiction, the need for a long-term and stable program, national and inter-provincial record-keeping improvements, and increased public costs.

Ultimately, an effective national pharmacare program must take into consideration all of these points, and balance the benefits and downfalls noted, to create a system that supports more comprehensive healthcare for Canadians. This research was completed by reviewing peer-reviewed journal articles obtained through the SFU library database, assigned book readings, and through online search of relevant articles and webpages.