



GPS Tracking: A Novel Prospect for Inspection and Monitoring of Pharmacies and Licensed Chemical Sellers

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Introduction

Inspections and monitoring are at the heart of ensuring a high quality of service in the practice of pharmacy. The Pharmacy Council has a major statutory function to secure in the public interest the highest standards in the practice of pharmacy. This is often achieved through inspections and monitoring of pharmacies and licensed chemical sellers, among other activities.

Problem Statement

The current database of pharmaceutical facilities is weak, inaccurate, and does not have fields for geographical coordinates or the capacity to generate reports that can be viewed spatially or pictorially. This affects the licensing process and makes it difficult for the Pharmacy Council to make any meaningful planning in the area of the regulation of distribution of facilities, inspections, and monitoring.

Objective

The aim of this intervention is to train staff of the Pharmacy Council on the use of Geographical Positioning System (GPS) units, as a first step to obtaining a geographical database of all pharmaceutical facilities nationwide.

Methodology

A managerial and educational intervention involving acquisition of the GPS system and units by the Pharmacy Council and subsequent training of six members of staff of the Pharmacy Council in the use of the system respectively. The GPS system was obtained from Management Sciences for Health (MSH) as part of the SEAM Program.

Results/Expected Results

The two-day training will help the six staff members of the Pharmacy Council become proficient in the use of the GPS system. The system will find utility in the activities of the Council, including supervision of facilities and knowledge of the spatial and pictorial distribution of existing shops; identification of exact geographical distance between existing facilities; and planning of monitoring, evaluation, and inspection visits. Activity is ongoing and expected to be completed in 2006.



Conclusion

GPS tracking is a useful, unique, and innovative regulatory tool, especially in the area of inspections and monitoring. Maximum benefits of this would be reaped if it is deployed fully, especially in the mapping out of existing facilities to have a complete geographical database.

Funding

This study was funded by MSH under the SEAM Program.