Prevention of Violence Against Pharmacists

National Drug Intelligence Center, 2008

“Oxycontin abuse has led to an increased number of pharmacy robberies, thefts, shoplifting incidents, and health care fraud incidents”
Reasons for increase in workplace violence in pharmacies

- Illegal drug shortages on the streets
- Quality – more dependable than illicit drugs
- Number of young people using prescription drugs to get high is growing

Cassell, D.K. Drug topics, Nov. 2007
Street Value: Oxycontin

- Typical dosage per pill = 80 milligrams
- Typical number of pills per Rx = 120
- Street value = $1 per milligram
- Street value per Rx bottle = $9,600
Extent of the problem

- National Institute of Justice 2007 –

“...the quantity of pharmaceuticals diverted through theft from legitimate sources, particularly pharmacies, is approximately 6.8 million dosage units (excluding liquids and powders) each year.”
NIOSH Multi-City Study

- 5 States (14 Cities) – Illinois, Ohio, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Wisconsin
- Police reports
- Data from 2005 and 2006
- Homicides, robberies, and assaults
NIOSH Multi-City Study: Number of Violent Incidents

- 1069 incidents involving healthcare workers
- 454 involving pharmacies or drug stores
  - 375 interior of store not pharmacy counter
  - 79 pharmacy counter
NIOSH Multi-City Study: Types of Incidents

- Robberies: 281
  - 214 interior of store
  - 67 pharmacy counter (~1/4 of robberies)

- Simple Assaults: 138
  - 126 interior of store
  - 12 pharmacy counter
NIOSH Multi-City Study: What was taken?

- Interior of store  
  - Cash  
    - 94 Robberies (~40% of Robberies)  
    - Schedule II medications  
      - 0 Robberies

- Pharmacy Counter  
  - Cash  
    - 12 Robberies  
  - Schedule II Medications  
    - 50 Robberies (~75% of Robberies)
Police Report Excerpts

- At approximately 9:40 PM, a male suspect entered the store pushing a shopping cart with a blanket inside. The suspect went to the pharmacy counter where he displayed a shotgun from inside the blanket and demanded Oxycontin and cash.

- At approximately 12:40 PM, a subject walks into the store and heads directly to the pharmacy area...the subject then placed the gun to the pharmacist’s head, and told him he wanted all the Oxycontin, Percocet, and Morphine.

- Subject handed the pharmacist a trash bag and told him to fill it up. At one point, subject tells the pharmacist “You aren’t going fast enough, do you want to die today?” and then placed the gun in his face.
RxPatrol data
May 1, 2003 - May 1, 2011

>6,300 total incidents reported

>1,900 robberies

>1,800 fraud cases

>900 forgeries

>1,200 Burglaries
What Makes a Good Program?

1. Video Surveillance?
2. Alarm Systems?
3. Security Guards?
4. Second Clerk at Night?
Evidence-Based Programs

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design

- Employee Training
- Cash Management
- Lighting
- Visibility
- Access Control
- General Appearance
- Signage
Prevention Strategies

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design

- Reduce environmental opportunity for crime
  + Increase offender’s perception of risk
  - Reduce incidence of crime
CPTED Application
CPTED Application
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Future Research

- Examine pharmacy operating procedures
  - Handling/storage of Schedule II medications

- Evaluate interior and exterior design features
  - Aisle heights/layout

- Structural issues: existing and new construction
  - Pharmacy counter placement/drive thru location
http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/violence/

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