

Documentation of Smoking Status: Results from a Randomized Trial to Promote Brief Smoking Cessation Interventions in Community Pharmacies

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BACKGROUND

With a goal to standardize and improve access to smoking cessation services for patients who smoke and want to quit, the UCSF School of Pharmacy and Safeway teamed to implement a pilot intervention program that incorporated brief smoking cessation activities as a routine component of care. The intervention approach, *Ask-Advise-Refer*, entailed: (1) asking patients whether they use tobacco, (2) advising smokers to quit, and (3) referring smokers who are ready to quit to a tobacco quitline to receive comprehensive cessation assistance.

Two training approaches for pharmacy personnel were evaluated, combining live and/or written materials as training methods, to determine the most feasible and effective approach prior to disseminating the *Ask-Advise-Refer* program corporate-wide.

OBJECTIVE

The objective of this study was to estimate the effects of two training approaches on the extent to which pharmacy personnel (pharmacists and technicians/clerks) ask patients about tobacco use and document smoking status in a community pharmacy dispensing system.

METHODS

- Safeway pharmacies (n=20) located throughout California were randomized, within strata defined by average weekly prescription volume (in quintiles, range 400-1599), to receive either:
 - Written materials-only training [W]
 - Written materials + 4-hour live training + active monitoring and coaching by pharmacy management [W + L]
- All participating sites had at least one full-time pharmacist and one full-time technician or clerk consenting to participate in the study. All sites had an onsite Wellness Center and had their non-prescription nicotine replacement therapy products moved from the customer service area at the front of the store to the pharmacy service area.
- Self-reported cessation interventions were assessed through web-based surveys completed by pharmacy personnel at baseline, post-training, and 6- and 12-weeks post-training.
- The proportion of active patient profiles with documented smoking status was monitored prospectively through weekly store metrics reports, characterizing only profiles with dispensing activity during the study period.
- Stores in the W+L group (n=10) received weekly feedback through e-mail communications from the corporate office and regional pharmacy managers.
- The study was approved by the UCSF Committee on Human Research.

RESULTS

- Within the 20 selected pharmacies, 46 pharmacists and 58 technicians were recruited for study participation. Of these, 44 pharmacists (95.7%) and 55 technicians/clerks (94.8%) consented to participate. At the 12-week follow up, 42 pharmacists (95%) and 46 (83.6%) technicians/clerks completed a 12-week post-training survey.
- Most pharmacists were female, Asian, PharmD-trained, and had never tried using tobacco (Table 1). The average age was 43 years (range, 26 to 69) and participants had been working as a pharmacist for a median of 15.9 years (range, 6 months to 45 years).
- Most technicians/clerks were female, Caucasian, and had never tried using tobacco. The average age was 38 years (range, 19 to 60) and participants had been working as a technician/clerk for a median of 9.4 years (range, 3 months to 28 years).
- Previous tobacco cessation training reported by pharmacists (categories not mutually exclusive):
 - Training in pharmacy school (36.4%)
 - CE training (live, written, web-based) after pharmacy school (43.2%)
 - No prior training (63.6%)
- At baseline, most pharmacists (37 of 44; 84%) and technicians (53 of 55; 96%) indicated that they had asked zero patients about their smoking status in the past week. At the 12-week follow-up survey, the percentages decreased (indicating that more patients are being asked) to:
 - Pharmacists: 14% and 15% in the W and W+L group, respectively
 - Technicians/clerks: 25% and 9% in the W and W+L group, respectively

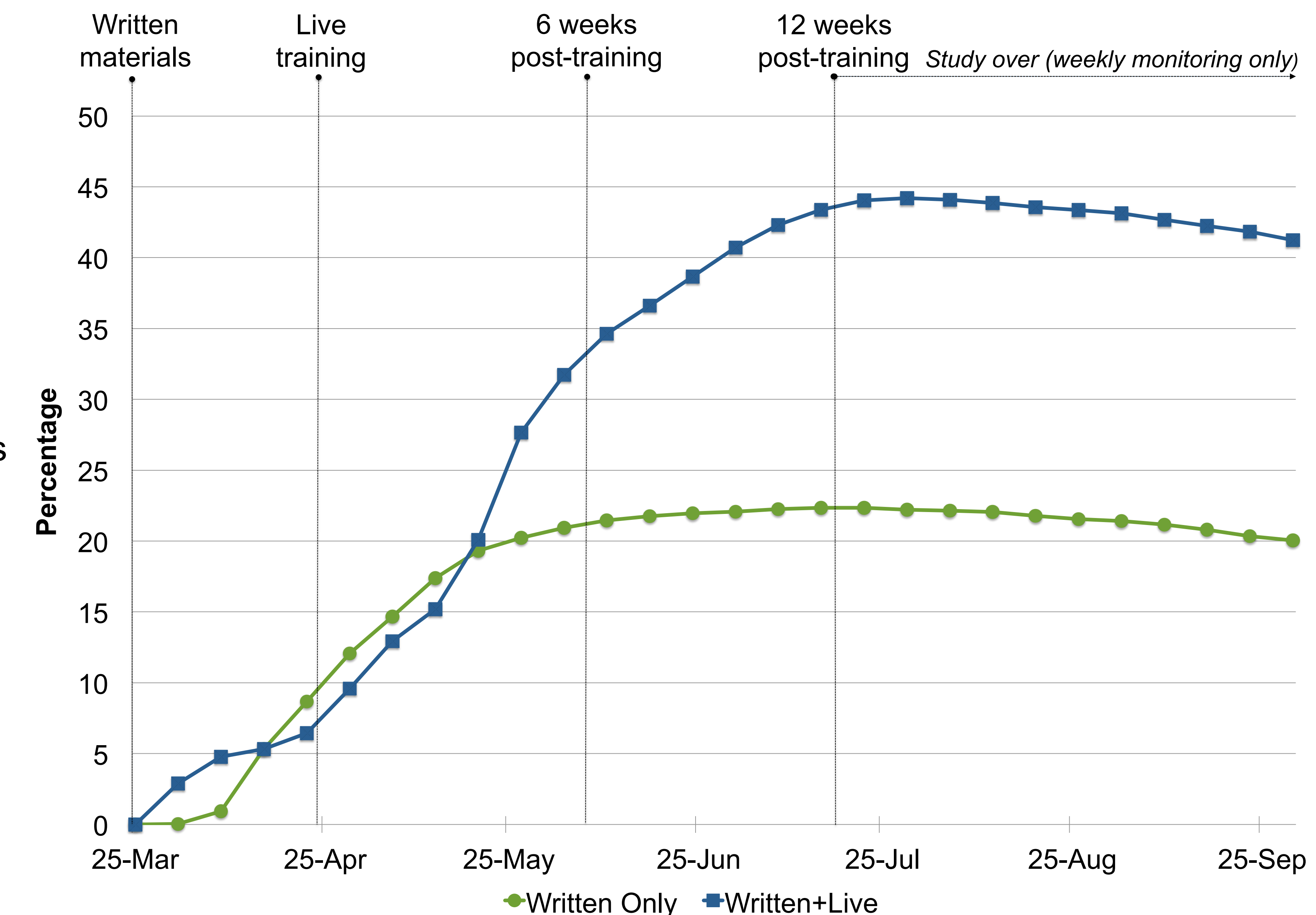
Table 1—Characteristics of study participants.

Characteristic	Category	Pharmacist n (%)	Tech/Clerk n (%)
Sex	Female	28 (63.6)	43 (78.1)
	Male	16 (34.4)	15 (27.9)
Race/ethnicity	Caucasian	15 (34)	26 (47.3)
	Asian	25 (56.8)	6 (10.9)
	Hispanic or Latino	1 (2.2)	20 (36.3)
	Other	3 (6.7)	2 (5.4)
Degree(s)/training	BS Pharmacy	14 (31.8%)	
	PharmD	32 (72.7%)	
	Masters	4 (9.1%)	N/A
	Residency	1 (2.3%)	
	Other	1 (2.3%)	
Current tobacco use	Once or more daily	1 (2.3)	4 (7.2)
	Use tobacco < once a day	0	0
	Used to use, but quit	4 (9)	10 (18.2)
	Experimented in the past	12 (27.2)	18 (32.7)
	Never tried	27 (61.3)	23 (41.8)

RESULTS (cont'd)

- Documentation of smoking status in the pharmacy patient profiles, tracked for a period of 6 months (Figure 1), was:
 - W group: 26% and 27%, at 6 and 12 weeks, respectively
 - W + L group: 35% and 45%, at 6 and 12 weeks respectively
- At 12 weeks, a significant between-group difference was observed for the overall proportion of active profiles with documented smoking status (p<0.05).

Figure 1—Weekly cumulative percentage of pharmacy computer profiles* with documentation of patient smoking status.



* Profiles with dispensing activity since initiation of the study.

CONCLUSIONS

- These data suggest that community pharmacy personnel are able to effectively and consistently integrate the identification and documentation of smoking status as a routine component of practice.
- Compared to a written materials-only training approach, written materials + a live training with active monitoring and coaching by pharmacy management resulted in higher levels of pharmacy computer profiles with documentation of patient smoking status.