

Abstract

Purpose:

This study aims to identify and evaluate benefits offered for veterans/military members by pharmacy schools in the USA. The intention is to recognize potential obstacles in locating various benefits and ensure that veterans/military members are adequately guided throughout the admission and educational process. In addition, this study targets to assess the need for additional widgets that could be added to the Southern Illinois University Edwardsville School of Pharmacy (SIUE SOP) website, which could provide additional benefits, ease and improve admission and academic processes for prospective veterans/military students. Also, it could be used as a model for other pharmacy schools to support and assist veterans/military students.

Methods:

For the initial area of the research, one hundred forty-one (141) pharmacy school websites were thoroughly reviewed between May and August of 2022 to obtain the data needed to determine if pharmacy schools in the USA offer educational benefits for veterans/military members. The American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy (AACCP) school locator tool was used to locate pharmacy schools in the USA and perform an exploratory review.

In addition, the research aimed to evaluate the level of comfort accessing and navigating the SIUE SOP website and determine the need for additional features that could be incorporated into the website to better serve prospective veterans/military students. To obtain feedback descriptive, non-experimental, web-based survey was distributed to approximately twenty-five (25) former and current SIUE SOP veterans/military students.

Results:

Among 141 pharmacy schools located in the USA, 15% included a direct link, and 85% did not have any direct link for veterans/military benefits on their websites. Furthermore, to determine the existence of veterans/military benefits that are not easily accessible, a search engine tool was utilized to see if schools have an indirect link to veterans/military benefits. 70% of schools offered benefits, while 30% did not have any link for veterans/military benefits on their website at all.

For the second part of the research, 14 responses were obtained from the survey. 57% of responders found it easy and were satisfied (64%) using/navigating the SIUE SOP website, 86% were positive for the accuracy/relevance of presented information, and 50% were positive regarding the information required for the admission process; however, 50% of respondents had trouble locating VA benefits on the same website. Regarding the desire to see additional widgets/benefits on the SIUE SOP website, 66-83% prefer to see an admission checklist, a list of available scholarships for veterans/military members, and direct link for benefits, and detailed instructions on how to obtain them; 66% would like to have a point of contact that will assist with the admission process, and 83% would like to see a direct link for campus resources and benefits.

Conclusion:

Even though the research identified and provided an excellent foundation for some of the issues veterans/military students have faced, there are still opportunities for growth and improvement. In order to better serve and assist our veterans/military members with the admission and

educational process, pharmacy schools could improve their websites by adding additional widgets/ features that will be more appealing and practical for their users.