



**IBEROAMERICAN
JOURNAL OF
MEDICINE**

iberoamericanjm

Journal homepage: www.iberoamericanjm.tk

Editorial

Evolving pharmacy profession around the globe towards an improved health care

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 25 April 2020

Received in revised form 27 April 2020

Accepted 27 April 2020

Keywords:

Pharmacy

Medicine

Health Care

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Fifty years ago, the primary role of the pharmacists has exclusively been to dispense prescriptions. Providing clinical pharmacy services at the hospitals' wards represented an evolution of the profession. However, the health care system, around the globe, is continuously developing. Public health demands and community expectations are increasing. The pharmacists' specialized knowledge, background in complex pharmaceutical science, drug development and professional judgment makes pharmacists uniquely placed in the health care team to manage and often to lead in the increasing complexity and personalized nature of medicine and medical conditions. Therefore, the pharmacist's role moved from the drug-centered service, as a drug expert, to a patient caregiver, including effectiveness, safety and patient experience. Pharmacy practice is an all-encompassing term which incorporates not only elements of clinical pharmacy and the legal and ethical aspects of professional practice but also various perspectives which assist in understanding of the wider social context in which pharmaceutical services are delivered [1].

Today, the pharmacist's distinctive new roles have

positively contributed to health care and society worldwide. Pharmacists are now assuming greater responsibility for patients' health status and optimizing the outcomes of drug use. They provide health care advice and manage chronic medical conditions. In addition, they have a prescriptive authority (initiating prescriptions) for specified conditions; minor ailments or conditions; or in emergency circumstances. They can renew or adapt prescriptions for continuing care. They may make therapeutic substitutions. Pharmacists administer drugs to patients and have an injection authority of vaccines, including influenza vaccine and travel vaccines or for all vaccines as well as in some states of all parenteral drug products. Furthermore, pharmacists use the consultation rooms in their pharmacies to conduct clinics of smoking cessation or provide diabetes education and order diagnostic laboratory tests and interpret tests results. They perform home medication reviews as well [2, 3].

The pharmacy field encompasses many disciplines, all of which relate to knowledge of drug therapies. Today, consultant pharmacists work at the specialized medical centers; critical-care pharmacists play a major role in

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<http://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3770372>

hospital intensive-care units and psychiatric pharmacists are involved in providing care to psychiatric patients. Pediatric and geriatric pharmacists are specialized to provide pharmaceutical care to children and elderly, respectively. However, ambulatory pharmacists and home-care pharmacists provide care to outpatients and in specialties such as HIV or renal transplantation. Other disciplines of health care where specialized pharmacists are employed include oncology departments, infectious disease control, public health, drug information, toxicology and poison control, nuclear medicine and nutrition support. Examples of the pharmacists' extended roles from countries around the globe are to be presented [4].

Nevertheless, an appropriate selection, education, training and workforce planning represent a prerequisite for the modern pharmacy roles. Specialized education programs are required. New pharmacists need to be properly qualified. Detailed clinical training is being conducted. Pharmacy education must prepare graduates to be scholars, scientists, practitioners and professionals (5). The academic study of pharmacy practice includes topics such as health education and promotion; social pharmacy, communication

and counseling, behavior change, legal and ethical aspects; professional judgments; health, pharmaco-economics and pharmaco-epidemiology. Presently, practicing pharmacists have to adapt the necessary knowledge and required skills, thus, they are able to develop their own practice and roles to meet changing needs.

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