

The role of pharmacy in today's modern healthcare environment



The Role of Pharmacy in Today's Modern Healthcare Environment As the Information Age ushered in to ignite trail-blazing changes in every aspect of society, pharmacy in modern healthcare had also undergone improvements to meet the challenges of the present. As pharmacy is an ancient profession, it was prominent in seventeenth-century England where the practitioners were apothecaries who ran shops and compounded various drugs and medications. However, pharmacists today are rarely called on to compound a drug or medication, which now comes packaged from the manufacturer. At present, pharmacists have become a pivotal part of the health care delivery team, with an emphasis on more direct patient care, particularly in counseling patients about medication use, possible adverse effects, and other medication-related concerns.

Like all medical fields, the field of pharmacy is facing formidable challenges. According to the National Association of Boards of Pharmacy in 2000, there are approximately 201,700 pharmacists in the United States with the numbers increasing by about 2,200 annually. Also, pharmacists are the third largest group of health care professionals, exceeded only by physicians and nurses. Unfortunately, most pharmacists entering the workforce today choose to practice in community pharmacies, and a substantial number take positions within the pharmaceutical industry. This is because community pharmacists make higher salaries than hospital pharmacists and the latter spend more time on patient care functions. Thus, this trend has left a shortage of pharmacists available to work in the hospital setting (Raffel and Barsukiewicz, 2002).

Another issue that hounds pharmacists today is the danger of committing medical errors. In today's pharmacy environment, there are many potential

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sources for error when filling a single prescription. For instance, prescription errors may be stratified into problems with drug prescribing, transcribing, administration, and dispensing. Each of these major categories can be further divided into more specific subsections. Prescribing errors may be made at the time a prescription is written. Examples include the wrong dose, wrong frequency, or illegible handwriting. Transcribing errors occur when the actual medication label is created incorrectly based on what was ordered on the original prescription. Administration errors occur when patients use incorrect administration techniques (i. e., ear drops applied to the eye), an expired drug is administered, or a drug is prepared incorrectly. Finally, dispensing errors are defined as errors that occur when distributing or selling prescriptions to patients or a patient's agent. Different sources of dispensing errors include filling prescriptions with the wrong drug owing to sound-alike names or look-alike packaging, distribution of the wrong strength, dosage form or quantity problems, distribution of a deteriorated drug, or wrong dosing instructions included with the dispensed medication. An additional example of a dispensing error would include a prescription that was filled correctly but then given to the wrong patient at the pharmacy "out-window" (Hoxsie, Keller and Armstrong, April 2006).

As the modernizing healthcare environment is revolutionizing the pharmacy practice and creating new opportunities and responsibilities for pharmacists, the future of pharmacists should provide a wider range of career options to choose from in areas such as managed care, pharmaco-economics, research & development, pharmacy informatics, prevention and disease management. Moreover, hospital pharmacy lies the future of pharmacy as an important field. Today, pharmacists and hospitals are responsible for <https://assignbuster.com/the-role-of-pharmacy-in-todays-modern-healthcare-environment/>

systems of total control of drug distribution, designed to ensure that each patient receives the appropriate medication in the correct form and dosage at the correct time. They are also an authoritative source of drug information for physicians, nurses, and patients. There are a number of specialized areas within hospital pharmacy, such as nuclear pharmacy, drug and poison information, and intravenous therapy. Hospital pharmacists are seeking to change the pharmacy from a supply department, which is a product-oriented technical function, to a patient-oriented clinical service in which the pharmacy would be a department of drug experts who would be more involved in monitoring and counseling on matters relating to drugs. Like doctors and nurses, pharmacists should strive for excellence, precision and accuracy in line with their work because we are dealing with people lives. With the growing complexity of the healthcare arena in the Information Age, the increase in evidence-based medicine and the increasing number of patients with multiple co-morbidities will make the coordination of medications between different members of a patient's health care team vital for patients. Thus, the role of pharmacy in the modern healthcare environment is constantly changing to convene with the needs of all patients.

Works Cited

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