

# PHARMACEUTICAL CARE

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## Introduction

Modern medicines are effective and specific in action. Of all modern therapeutic treatments available, only medicines are primarily self-administered, therefore success depends upon the active participation of patients and they require objective information if they are to derive maximum therapeutic benefit and avoid unwanted side effects from courses of treatment. Therapy with prescribed medicines is a collaborative process involving the patient, the physician, the pharmacist and other health care providers. In recent years, therefore, pharmacists have adopted a much more patient centred approach in the professional services they provide. This ensures that both patient care and economic aspects are considered and are correctly ba-

lanced in the interests of the patient. There is increasing use of nonprescription medicines in the treatment of common ailments and the range of effective medicines available without medical prescription is also increasing. Here the role of the pharmacist is to ensure that all necessary information and advice is given to encourage safe and effective use of a medicine. FIP considers, therefore, that within the concept of pharmaceutical care there is no essential difference in the role of the pharmacist in respect of prescription and nonprescription medicines.

The principles of pharmaceutical care are embedded in the concept of Good Pharmacy Practice. This statement is intended as a framework within which national pharmaceutical associations can set national standards under the headings relevant in their countries.

### Definition

Pharmaceutical Care is the responsible provision of pharmacotherapy for the purpose of achieving definite outcomes that improve or maintain a patient's quality of life. It is a collaborative process that aims to prevent or identify and solve medicinal product and health related problems. This is a continuous quality improvement process for the use of medicinal products.

### Pharmaceutical Care Requirements

The goal of Pharmaceutical Care is to optimise the patient's health-related quality of life and to achieve positive clinical outcomes. To achieve this goal a structured approach is needed, which comprises distinctive steps:

**A. Pharmaceutical Care** requires that a professional relationship between the patient and the pharmacist must be established and maintained.

**B. Pharmaceutical Care** requires that records of medication provided to a patient must be kept and that, with the patient's informed consent, additional patient-specific information must be collected, organised, recorded, monitored and maintained.

**C. Pharmaceutical Care** requires that patient-specific medical information must be evaluated and, in the case of prescribed medicines, a therapy plan developed involving the patient and the prescriber. In satisfying these requirements:

- The relationship is established and maintained on the basis of caring, trust, open communication and mutual decision making. In this relationship pharmacists give the patient's welfare priority and use all their professional knowledge and skills on the patient's behalf. In exchange, the patient agrees to supply personal information, expresses preferences and participates in the preparation of the therapeutic plan.
- Pharmacists collect information on medicine or health related problems and decide which data are necessary to perform a critical appraisal of the patient's problem. Since this information will form the basis for decisions relating to the development and subsequent modification of the pharmacotherapy plan, it must be accurate, as complete as possible and systematically recorded to ensure that

it is readily retrievable. Patient information must be maintained in a confidential manner and be updated as necessary and appropriate.

- A pharmaco-therapy plan should be developed with the active participation of the patient. The pharmacist's contribution should focus on the balance between the complexity of the therapy, the cost and the patient's likelihood of the patient adhering to the plan. The patient should be fully informed in easily understandable language of the essential elements of the plan, including their own responsibilities. The plan must be documented in the patient's record and, where appropriate, communicated to other healthcare providers.

- Pharmacists should be adequately remunerated for these additional services.

### **Practice principles**

#### **Data collection**

The pharmacist conducts interviews with the patient in a setting designed to ensure privacy. The data obtained are accurate, appropriately organised and kept current. Patient data are confidential and are provided to others only with informed consent of the patient or as required by law.

#### **Evaluation of Information and Formulating a Plan**

The pharmacist, collaborating with other healthcare providers and the patient, identifies and values the most appropriate action to ensure the safety and effectiveness (inc-

luding cost effectiveness) of current or planned pharmacotherapy and to minimise current or potential future health-related problems. The pharmacist documents, in the patient's record, the plan and desirable outcomes for each problem identified.

### **Implementing the Plan**

The pharmacist works with the patient to maximise patient understanding and commitment to the pharmaceutical care therapy plan. The pharmacist ensures that the patient knows how to use all necessary medication and any equipment associated with monitoring or administration properly.

### **Monitoring and Modifying the Plan to Ensure Positive Outcomes**

The pharmacist regularly reviews with the patient progress toward achieving the desired outcomes and provides a report to the patient's other healthcare providers as appropriate. Progress towards outcomes is achieved, the patient should receive positive reinforcement to encourage continuing co-operation. If the expected progress is not being achieved, then the plan should be modified, applying the principles used in formulating the original plan.

### **Follow up**

When the desired outcomes have been achieved, a follow up procedure should be established to ensure the continued well being of the patient.