

CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Maintaining competence throughout a career, during which new and challenging professional responsibilities will be encountered, is a fundamental ethical requirement for all health professionals.

FIP has recognised this responsibility:

- In obligation 8 in its *Code of Ethics* (1) for pharmacists (“to ensure competency in each pharmaceutical service provided by continually updating knowledge and skills”);
- In the document *Standards for Quality of Pharmaceutical Services – Good Pharmacy Practice in Community and Hospital Settings* (2)

(“pharmacists in each practice setting should accept personal responsibility for maintaining and assessing their own

competence throughout their professional working lives") ("national pharmaceutical organisations should also take action to ensure that pharmaceutical education, both pre-university and post-university qualification, is designed to equip pharmacists for the roles they have to undertake in community and hospital practice")

- In its Statement on Good Pharmacy Education Practice (3); (*"Continuing Professional Development must be a lifelong commitment for every practising pharmacist"*).

This statement on Continuing Professional Development establishes a framework within which this obligation can be met.

1) FIP Statement on Professional Standards: Code of Ethics Pharmacists, Vancouver 1997.

2) FIP Guidelines on Good Pharmacy Practice (GPP) in Community and Hospital Pharmacy Settings - Standards for Quality of Pharmaceutical Services, Tokyo 1993 (revised in 1997), as approved by WHO in April 1997

3) FIP Policy Statement on Good Pharmacy Education Practice, Vienna 2000.

Pharmacists are health care professionals whose professional responsibilities include seeking to ensure that people derive maximum therapeutic benefit from their treatments with medicines. This requires them to keep abreast of developments in pharmacy practice and the pharmaceutical sciences, professional standards requirements, the laws governing pharmacy and medicines and advances in knowledge and technology relating to use of medicines.

This can only be achieved by an individual's personal commitment to Continuing Professional Development.

The regulatory bodies for pharmacists in some countries already require, and others are moving towards requiring, demonstration, at stated intervals, of participation in CPD, as a pre-requisite for the revalidation of the right to practise. This is likely to become a general pattern. Patients have a right to be confident that professionals providing health care remain competent throughout their working lives. They will expect governments, accreditation agencies and other pharmacy bodies with a legitimate interest, to seek assurances that regulatory bodies are taking the necessary action to achieve this goal.

Definitions

The concept of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) can be defined as "the responsibility of individual pharmacists for systematic maintenance, development and broadening of knowledge, skills and attitudes, to ensure continuing competence as a professional, throughout their careers."

CPD is more than participation in Continuing Education (CE) which, on its own, does not necessarily lead to positive changes in professional practice nor does it necessarily improve healthcare outcomes (4).

CE is, however, an important part of a structured CPD programme, personalised for each pharmacist. The process should be visible to ensure credibility with the public. CPD must be actively managed to be effective and will include

- Self appraisal;
- Personal plan;
- Participation;
- Action (implementation); and
- Evaluation

It must be an ongoing, cyclical process of continuous quality improvement by which pharmacists seek to maintain and enhance their competence in both current duties and anticipated future service developments.

An illustration of the cyclical programme, with appropriate details, is described in the Annex.

Recommendations

Recognising the requirement for practising pharmacists to maintain competence as practitioners through CPD which involves pharmacists in:

- Assessing their learning and development needs;
- Planning and implementing a structured learning programme; and
- Recording and evaluating the resulting improvements in their professional practice

FIP recommends that national pharmaceutical associations in co-operation, where appropriate, with schools and faculties of pharmacy and other education providers

1. establish national learning needs;
2. motivate pharmacists by demonstrating how individual competence can be improved and thus the advantage of participation in CPD;

3. raise awareness of appropriate frameworks for personal development plans and recording systems;

4. provide opportunities for CPD by facilitating the provision of a wide range of CE programmes in a variety of formats.

5. ensure that opportunities are available for individual pharmacists to learn how to draw up SMART plans (**S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**ealistic and **T**imed) for a personalised programme of CPD;

6. establish mechanisms for individual evaluations including questionnaires, checklists, rating scales and self-assessment tests, which are effective and are easy to apply for all types of CPD activity;

7. recommend standards for CE providers and be part of any accreditation system.

8. provide the knowledge and share resources for CE programmes, which are based on pharmacists' competence to practise;

9. establish quality assurance systems for CPD activities against the learning objectives. For its part, FIP will encourage international collaboration, to include exchange of information, by those involved at national level in all aspects of CPD programmes.

Conclusion

Commitment by each individual to participation in structured CPD is essential for all practising pharmacists. In the

care of a patient, contemporary, competent practice will require continuous improvement in skills and performance.

As well as demonstrating professional commitment, participation in structured CPD will provide for flexible career choices, enhance career satisfaction and improve patient care.

(4) Impact on formal continuing medical education, JAMA. 1999; 282:867-74.

- Personal assessment
- Performance review by a manager
- Audit exercise undertaken with others
- Requirement of professional or health authority

2. Personal Plan – identify resources and actions required to meet personal CPD needs.

3. Action – participate in CPD (including presentations, tutoring, formal and informal meetings, workshops, short courses, teaching, talking with colleagues and experts, mentoring, formal education programmes and self study, among other methods).

4. Documentation – keep records of all CPD activities completed and provide that documentation when required.

5. Evaluation – evaluate personal benefit and benefit to patients from participation in any significant CPD activity. The following questions should be asked and answered:

- Were the addressed needs met?
- How has practice improved?
- How have patients benefited?
- Did learning breakdown? If so, why?

Then re-enter the cycle to ensure continuing professional development.

Annex:

Continuing Professional Development Process

Five step cyclical process

1. Self-Appraisal
2. Personal plan
3. Action (Implementation)
4. Documentation
5. Evaluation

Defining of steps

1. Self Appraisal - identification of Continuing Professional Development needs may be accomplished by one or more of the following: