

Pharmacist As A Consultant

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ABSTRACT: Objective: To understand the term ‘consultant pharmacist’ and introduce the responsibilities associated with it. Methods: Consultant pharmacists counsel patients of all age groups, and provide recommendations to physicians or prescribers. They also review the medication regimens, and provide in-service educational programs. Through the valuable work of consultant pharmacists, treatment suggestions are made, taking into account the potential adverse effects and interactions among drug, food and disease. All the untreated or undertreated health concerns of the patients are recognized and can be treated with the help of consultant pharmacists. The entire medication regimen is carefully reviewed, including prescription R_x, dietary supplements, herbal products and over the counter drugs, to determine whether the drug is correct with respect to disease, dosed correctly, and affordable for the patient. Results: Thus, consultant pharmacists have to have the best knowledge of all the drug related aspects including the pharmacology and pharmacognosy of synthetic as well as herbal medicines.

KEYWORDS: Pharmacist; Consultant; Medication regimen; Prescription R_x

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I. INTRODUCTION

Consultant is a person who provides expert advice professionally and pharmacist is a health care professional who learns and practices in pharmacy focusing on safe and effective use of medicines. Together, consultant pharmacists work as counselors providing expert advice on the use of medicines to medical institutions, medical practices, nursing homes and individual patients wherever they live. They are essential clinicians on the health care team providing patient-centered care and influencing decision making in the medication therapy.

At present, consultant pharmacists have gained a tremendous recognition throughout the world. They are equally involved with the medical team during the treatment of patients.

1.2. History and Development

The founding father of this clinical work is George F. Archambault. He created the phrase “consultant pharmacist”. The idea originated in the nursing home environment where a group of dedicated pharmacists focused on improving the patient outcomes [1].

By sharing a common goal to enhance the quality of care for all the patients, consultant pharmacists now practice in other settings also such as (i) assisted living facilities, (ii) psychiatric hospitals, (iii) sub-acute and post-acute care, (iv) in home and community based care.

The two main countries in which the practices of consultant pharmacists are being observed are: United States of America (USA) and United Kingdom (UK). Many other countries are also engaged in providing better healthcare system through the practices of consultant pharmacists.

In USA, the organization named as ‘The American Society of Consultant Pharmacists’ (ASCP) is dedicated to all older patients and their management of medicines. They provide improved and better health outcomes. It was founded in 1969, and is a non-profit membership organization which is currently based in Alexandria, VA. Here, consultant pharmacists focus on reviewing and managing the prescriptions of patients, particularly in the nursing homes and hospitals. Their main agenda is to ensure that their patient’s medicines are suitable, effective, and safe. Also, the patients get information about the route of administration of particular medicines. This group of pharmacists identifies and prevents the problems that may interfere with the goals of therapy and thus provides better results.

In the UK’s National Health Services (NHS), consultant pharmacist has advanced roles in patient health care, education and research in an expert area of practice. The Department of Health (DH) for England produced guidance related to the posts of consultant pharmacists in 2005. The guidance described the roles of

consultant pharmacists and the posts are intended to be new and innovative. This helped in improving patient care by retaining clinical excellence [2, 3].

II. METHODS

2.1. How to Become a Consultant Pharmacist

The University Of Florida, College Of Pharmacy is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education (ACPE) as a provider of continuing pharmacy education. They provide the following courses, (i) Initial Certification, (ii) Recertification, (iii) Redefining and refining the treatment approaches to Cardiovascular medicine, (iv) Optimizing Geriatric care [4].

Those who have passed diploma and degree in pharmacy education and are registered pharmacists of their country can also work as consultant pharmacists in different institutions. The only requirement is to have appropriate degree and sound knowledge of pharmacology related to various drugs and their interactions.

2.2. Services of Consultant Pharmacist

The entire list of services and daily activities of consultant pharmacists are given in Table 1.

Table 1 Services, daily activities and places at which consultant pharmacists work. [5, 6]

Services of Consultant Pharmacists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Members of the healthcare team. i. Drug information resources i. Providers of pharmacy system v. Educators of medications v. Clinical practitioners i. Patient caregivers
Daily activities of Consultant Pharmacists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Review of Drug Regimen i. Assessments of Nutrition i. Information related to drugs in the prescription v. Drug Research Programs v. Pharmacokinetic Dosing Services i. Counseling of Pain Management i. Intravenous Drug Monitoring i. Therapeutic Drug Monitoring x. Durable Medical Equipments (DME) x. Quality Assurance Programs i. In-service Education Programs i. Generation of Forms and Reports on Computer
Places at which Consultant Pharmacists work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Assisted living facilities i. Community pharmacies i. Hospitals v. Independent practice v. Mental health facilities i. Nursing homes i. Pharmaceutical companies i. Physician's offices x. Post-acute care/ Sub-acute care x. Rehabilitation centers i. Home care

2.3. Consultant pharmacists as community pharmacists in traditional medicine

Traditional System of Medicine which includes all herbal products has been in use since a long period. The herbal products have gained a lot of popularity and recognition in almost every country. But concomitant use of herbs with synthetic medicine may affect the health of patient. This may also result in severe herb-drug interaction. The various duties of pharmacists in traditional medicine are listed in Table 2.

Table 2 Responsibilities of consultant pharmacists in Traditional System of Medicine. [7]

Services of Consultant Pharmacists in traditional medicine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. To acknowledge the proper use of traditional medicine i. To be completely knowledgeable about the herbal products and their interactions i. To ensure the safe and effective use of traditional medicine v. To document the use of herbal medicine v. To report the adverse drug reactions related to traditional
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	medicine i. To provide educational programs about traditional medicine i. To collaborate with other healthcare professionals in order to share the data of herbal and synthetic medicine.
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III. RESULTS

In this study, the roles and responsibilities of pharmacists as consultants are explored. The consultant pharmacists are essential part of the healthcare team. They provide best advice on medicines, dosage form, side effects and adverse effects related to the drug, disease and patient. Without the presence of consultant pharmacists, the expert recommendations on prescriptions cannot be obtained. Also, the traditional medicine can be recommended by the help of pharmacist practicing in that particular field.

IV. CONCLUSION

Pharmacists as consultants are required in the health care team. With other physicians and nurses, consultant pharmacists can be used as an important tool to suggest best possible medication regimen for patients of all age groups. In order to be a good and professional consultant pharmacist, the pharmacist must be knowledgeable about all the drug related aspects, pharmacology and pharmacognosy of synthetic and herbal medicines. India must also incorporate the jobs of consultant pharmacists in hospitals, nursing homes and traditional system of medicines, so that pharmacists do their best patient counseling and patients get better treatments. The role of pharmacists is not just to sell the medicines by seeing the prescription of a physician. It is also the most important role of pharmacists to explain the right route of administration of different types of medicines to the patients. And it is ultimately the responsibility of pharmacists to value lives.

Declaration of interest

The authors report no conflicts of interest. The authors alone are responsible for the content and writing of this article.

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