

Good Pharmacy Practices

- In 1992 the International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP) developed standards for pharmacy services under the heading “*Good pharmacy practice in community and hospital pharmacy settings*”.

- **The health of the public is fundamental to the happiness and welfare of all people.**
- **Barriers to good health include poor access to quality medical products, lack of access to trained health professionals and care, an inadequate health workforce, unaffordable cost of care and poor standards of education of health-care professionals.**

- **Medicines are an essential and critical part of health-care services in all cultures and societies.**
- **There is a gap between the proven efficacy of medicines demonstrated in clinical trials and their actual effectiveness in practice.**

The reasons for this gap include problems with:

- **Medicine selection and dosages,**
- **improper administration of medicines and lack of adherence by patients to prescribed treatment,**
- **medicine–medicine and medicine–food interactions,**
- **adverse medicine events.**
 - **Besides clinical problems associated with medicine-related problems, there are; cost implications.**

As health-care professionals, pharmacists play an important role in *improving access to health care* and *in closing the gap between the potential benefit of medicines and the actual value realized* and should be part of any comprehensive health system.

The mission of pharmacy practice is to contribute to health improvement and to help patients with health problems to make the best use of their medicines.

There are six components to this mission:

- being readily available to patients with or without an appointment;
- identifying and managing or triaging health-related problems;
- health promotion;
- assuring effectiveness of medicines;
- preventing harm from medicines; and
- making responsible use of limited health-care resources.

What is good pharmacy practice (GPP)?

GPP is the practice of pharmacy that responds to the needs of the people who use the pharmacists' services to provide optimal, evidence-based care. To support this practice it is essential

Requirements of good pharmacy practice

- **GPP requires that a pharmacist's first concern in all settings is the welfare of patients.**
- **GPP requires that the core of the pharmacy activity is to help patients make the best use of medicines. Fundamental functions include the supply of medication and other health-care products of assured quality, the provision of appropriate information and advice to the patient, administration of medication, when required, and the monitoring of the effects of medication use.**

- **GPP requires that an integral part of the pharmacist's contribution is the promotion of rational and economic prescribing, as well as dispensing.**
- **GPP requires that the objective of each element of pharmacy service is relevant to the patient, is clearly defined and is effectively communicated to all those involved.**
- **Multidisciplinary collaboration among health-care professionals is the key factor for successfully improving patient safety.**

Role 1: Prepare, obtain, store, secure, distribute, administer, dispense and dispose of medical products

Function A: Prepare extemporaneous medicine preparations and medical products

Pharmacists should ensure that;

- medicine preparation areas are appropriately designed to permit ease of extemporaneous preparations and are maintained in a manner that minimizes the potential for medication errors and assures the cleanliness and safety of medical products.
- compounded medicines are consistently prepared to comply with written formulas and quality standards for raw materials, equipment and preparation processes, including sterility where appropriate.

Function B: Obtain, store and secure medicine preparations and medical products

- **Pharmacists who are responsible for procurement should ensure that the procurement process is transparent, professional and ethical so as to promote equity and access and to ensure accountability to relevant governing and legal entities.**
- **Pharmacists who are responsible for procurement should ensure that procurement is supported by strong quality assurance principles to assure that substandard, adulterated, unlicensed and spurious/false-labelled/falsified/counterfeit medicines are not procured or allowed into the system.**
- **Pharmacists who are responsible for procurement should ensure that procurement is supported by a reliable information system which provides accurate, timely and accessible information.**
- **Pharmacists should establish contingency plans for shortages of medicines and for purchases in emergencies.**
- **Pharmacists should assure that proper storage conditions are provided for all medicines, especially for controlled substances, used in the pharmacy or health-care facility**

Function C: Distribute medicine preparations and medical products

- **Pharmacists should ensure that all medical products, including medicine samples, are handled and distributed in a manner that assures reliability and safety of the medicine supply.**
- **Pharmacists should establish an effective distribution system which includes a written procedure, to recall promptly and effectively medical products known or suspected to be defective or spurious/false-labelled/falsified/counterfeit, with a designated person(s) responsible for recalls.**
- **Pharmacists should develop with manufacturers, wholesalers and government agencies (where appropriate) an access plan for uninterrupted supply of essential medicines as part of a disaster or pandemic preparedness strategy.**
- **As part of a disaster or pandemic preparedness strategy, national medicines regulatory agencies may introduce new medicines which are authorized for marketing with limited safety data; pharmacists have a responsibility to be aware of the safety issues and to institute necessary mechanisms for monitoring occurrence of adverse events.**

Function D: Administration of medicines, vaccines and other injectable medications

- **Pharmacists should have a role in the preparation and administration of medicines, in establishing procedures in their work settings with respect to the administration, and in monitoring the outcomes of medication administration.**
- **Pharmacists should have an educator, facilitator and immunizer role, thus contributing to the prevention of diseases through participation in vaccination programmes, by ensuring vaccination coverage and by also ensuring vaccine safety.**
- **Pharmacists should participate in directly observed therapy (DOT) programmes in areas such as the management of drug addiction, HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and sexually transmitted diseases, where applicable.**

Function E: Dispensing of medical products

- Pharmacists should ensure that appropriate facilities, trained personnel, standard dispensing practices and documentation procedures are in place in the pharmacy for the supply and dispensing of prescribed medicines and other health-care products.
- Pharmacists should assess and evaluate all paper or electronic prescriptions received, considering the therapeutic, social, economic and legal aspects of the prescribed indication(s) before supplying medical products to the patient. Where possible, generic substitution is recommended.
- Pharmacists should ensure patient confidentiality at the point of dispensing medical products and should provide advice to ensure that the patient receives and understands sufficient written and oral information to derive maximum benefit for the treatment.

Function F: Dispose of medicine preparations and medical products

- Pharmacists should ensure that regular monitoring of the medicines inventory is conducted and should always include medicines samples in the process of periodic inspection for expiration dates and removal of outdated stock.
- Pharmacists should ensure that recalled medical products, including medicines samples, are immediately stored separately for subsequent disposal and prevented from being available for further dispensing or distribution.
- Pharmacists should establish a safe way of medicines waste disposal at the hospital and/or community pharmacy so that patients and the public can be encouraged to return their expired or unwanted medicines and medical devices. Alternatively, pharmacists should provide appropriate information to patients on how to safely dispose of expired or unwanted medicines.

Role 2: Provide effective medication therapy management

Function A: Assess patient health status and needs

- Pharmacists should ensure that health management, disease prevention and healthy lifestyle behaviour are incorporated into the patient assessment and care process.
- Pharmacists should acknowledge unique patient considerations such as education level, cultural beliefs, literacy, native language and physical and mental capacity in all individual patient assessments.

Function B: Manage patient medication therapy

- **Pharmacists should maintain access to an appropriate evidence base relating to the safe, rational and cost-effective use of medicines such as reference books on medicines, journals, national essential medicines lists and standard treatment guidelines. 3 Medication therapy management is a distinct service or group of services that optimize therapeutic outcomes for individual patients. Medication therapy management services are independent of, but can occur in conjunction with, the provision of a medication product.**
- **Pharmacists should ensure that medicine formulary system(s) (local, regional and/ or national) are linked to standard treatment guidelines, protocols and treatment pathways based on the best available evidence.**

- **Pharmacists should have a key role in educating prescribers on the access to and evidence for optimal and appropriate use of medicines including the required monitoring parameters and prescribing adjustments. Where appropriate, pharmacists should provide advice or recommendations to the prescriber on medicine therapy, including the selection of the appropriate medication or dosage.**
- **Pharmacists should have access to, contribute to and use all necessary clinical and patient data to coordinate effective medication therapy management, especially when multiple health-care practitioners are involved in the patient's medication therapy, and intervene if necessary.**

- **Pharmacists should establish a standard operating procedure for referrals to physicians, specialists or other health-care providers, where appropriate.**
- **Pharmacists should provide continuity of care by transferring information on patients' medicines as patients move between sectors of care.**

Function C: Monitor patient progress and outcomes

- Pharmacists should consider patient diagnosis and patient-specific needs when assessing patient response to medicine therapy and intervene if necessary.
- Pharmacists should document necessary clinical and patient data to assess and monitor medication therapy and to track patients' therapeutic outcomes.
- Pharmacists should perform point-of-care testing for patients in order to monitor and adjust therapy, when needed.

Function D: Provide information about medicines and health-related issues

- **Pharmacists should ensure that in every pharmacy there is a suitable place for discussing confidential information with the customers and patients.**
- **Pharmacists should provide sufficient health, disease and medicine specific information to patients for their participation in their decision-making process regarding a comprehensive care management plan. This information should aim at supporting adherence to treatment and empowerment of the patient.**
- **Pharmacists should be proactive in reducing antimicrobial resistance by providing information about the appropriate use of antimicrobials to consumers and prescribers.**

Role 3: Maintain and improve professional performance

Function A: Plan and implement continuing professional development 4 strategies to improve current and future performance

- Pharmacists should perceive continuing education as being lifelong and be able to demonstrate evidence of continuing education or continuing Professional development to improve clinical knowledge, skills and performance.
- Pharmacists should take steps to update their knowledge and skills about complementary and alternative therapies such as traditional Chinese medicines, health supplements, acupuncture, homeopathy and naturopathy.
- Pharmacists should take steps to update their knowledge and be engaged in implementation of new technology and automation in pharmacy practice, where feasible.
- Pharmacists should take steps to become informed and update their knowledge on changes to information on medical products.

Role 4: Contribute to improve effectiveness of the health-care system and public health

Function A: Disseminate evaluated information about medicines and various aspects of self-care

- Pharmacists should ensure that the information provided to patients, other healthcare professionals and the public is evidence-based, objective, understandable, nonpromotional, accurate and appropriate.
- Pharmacists should develop and/or use educational materials for health management, health promotion and disease prevention programmes that are applicable to a wide range of patient populations, age groups and health literacy levels.
- Pharmacists should educate patients on how to evaluate and use web-based or other forms of health-care information (including medicines information) and strongly encourage them to be advised by a pharmacist regarding the information they find, particularly if obtained from the Internet.
- Pharmacists should assist patients and their care providers to obtain and critically analyse information to meet their individual needs.

Function B: Engage in preventive care activities and services

- **Pharmacists should engage in preventive care activities that promote public health and prevent disease, i.e. in areas such as smoking cessation, infectious and sexually transmitted diseases.**
- **Pharmacists should provide point-of-care testing, where applicable, and other health screening activities for patients at higher risk of disease.**

Function C: Comply with national professional obligations, guidelines and legislations

- **Pharmacists should take steps to ensure that they comply with the provisions of a national code of ethics for pharmacists**

Function D: Advocate and support national policies that promote improved health outcomes

- **Pharmacists should contribute to public and professional groups to promote, evaluate and improve health in the community.**
- **Pharmacists should collaborate with other health-care professionals in their efforts to improve health outcomes.**

There are four main roles where pharmacists' involvement or supervision is expected by society and the individuals they serve:

1. Prepare, obtain, store, secure, distribute, administer, dispense and dispose of medical products.
2. Provide effective medication therapy management.
3. Maintain and improve professional performance.
4. Contribute to improve effectiveness of the health-care system and public health.

- **Specific standards of GPP can be developed only within a national pharmacy professional organization framework.**