



## HEALTHCARE WITHOUT PHARMACIST - IMPOSSIBLE

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Healthcare cannot be adequately provided without the medicines and a competent pharmacy workforce to supply them. All over the world efforts are being made to change the scope of hospital pharmacy by moving the hospital pharmacists from dispensing counters into the wards and clinics. Similarly, there is an increasing trend in developing countries such as Pakistan, India, and Bangladesh towards Doctor of Pharmacy (Pharm. D) level education. In Pakistan, approximately 4000 pharmacists graduate every year. More than 50% work in the pharmaceutical industry and less than 25% actually work in a hospital or community pharmacy. This number is not sufficient to provide optimal healthcare delivery to the population in hospital and community settings.

The tragedy is that, in Pakistan who is giving information about drugs to people? A lay man, not even matriculate in most of the cases, is renting the category (Certificate of Registration) of a pharmacist to open a medical store. The current scenario of the healthcare system shows the main pillar which is missing that is the Pharmacist. As recognized globally Pharmacist is the only custodian of drug and in our homeland we do admit Pharmacist as a pillar of healthcare system, but unfortunately practically we don't agree with the statement by not implementing the approved and required pharmaceutical care system where Pharmacist is the Suggestive and Strong Supportive member of the healthcare team.

There is no appropriate service structure which may help the Pharmacist and the Pharmacy profession to flourish due to one or the other reason. Worldwide Pharmacists are being absorbed in the wide pool of community Pharmacy but in Pakistan the rights to do pharmacy practice are being rented. There is no strict check and balance by the legislative bodies to check whether the Pharmacy/Chemist Shop/Distributor /Wholesaler is being ran by a legally qualified and professionally competent Pharmacist or a simple investor/business men. Hence all the fresh production of competent Pharmacists wanders here and

there for Internships/ trainings /jobs which are rarely found. The need of time is to critically look into the healthcare system and the application of the Pharmacist and the Pharmacy profession so that we are able to get the desired healthcare system by utilizing such an educated and recognized professional who is of the utmost importance. There are many factors which are affecting the quality of Pharmacists being produced. To solve all these problems there is need of a strong correlation between the Teaching Institute, The Pharmacist Association and the Pharmacy Council. We have to plan for our upcoming Pharmacists which are being produced and to plan for their proper utilization so that the existing available manpower is utilized wherever required. For instance, I am mentioning some fields where Pharmacists need to be deployed with a proper career counseling and service structure so that they are benefited and work confidently for the betterment of their own life and society. The various fields/areas suggested are give as under:

### 1. Pharmaceutical Industry

- Dose development
- Material procurement and management
- Manufacturing process (cGMP)
- Quality control and quality assurance
- Package designing
- Packaging and labeling
- Post marketing surveillance

### 2. Distribution and Community Pharmacy Setups:

- Proper inventory management
- Proper storage as per standard operating procedures
- Management of controlled Drugs
- Dispensing of all prescriptions as per need of patient
- Patient counseling and community education
- Training of staff for the appropriate handling of drugs

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### **3. Sales and Marketing:**

- Detailing to physicians for new drugs and dosage regimens
- Educating the healthcare professionals about new drug developments and dose changes for the rational usage of drugs

### **4. Hospitals and Healthcare Setups:**

- Devising the formulary according to needs of the healthcare setup
- Purchasing and proper storage of drugs
- Dispensing of drugs to the patients according to standard protocol
- Monitoring the patients for any adverse drug effects and interactions of any type
- Playing a suggestive and supportive role to the physician in the desired clinical output of the drug
- Dose calculations for special population
- Training and education of the nursing and other paramedics for proper, safe and effective handling of drugs
- Compounding of extemporaneous preparations as desired or needed by the physicians

### **5. Legislative Bodies:**

- Pharmacist is the part of Drug Regulatory Authorities for Licensing, Inspecting, Pricing, Import and Export, Scheduling of Controlled Drugs and Sale of Drugs

### **6. Research and Education:**

- Pharmacists are involved in research and education for the betterment of healthcare sector across the

globe to serve the humanity, as the basic necessity is health for all the legally qualified and technically eligible healthcare professional for the above said tasks in various domains is referred as “Pharmacist”, who performs a variety of jobs in multiple sectors to make the drugs safe, effective and economic for the end user. In the recent years, the most prominent role of a pharmacist has been the “community healthcare provider”, where he/she interprets and counsels about the use and adverse effects of medically prescribed drugs. Depending upon the legal scope of practice worldwide the pharmacist may even contribute to prescribing and administering certain medication (immunizations).

Contrary to the worldwide accepted rules and regulations, the role of Pharmacist in Pakistan is totally neglected by the healthcare authorities while policy making, the policies forged by the legislating bodies in Pakistan have certain loop holes which make the use of pharmaceuticals unsafe, in-effective and expensive for the end user. The upshots of the above said have had lime light in the recent past; Punjab Institute of Cardiology (PIC) scandal , the Ephedrine scam and the Tyno syrup scandal are a few of the hundreds of drug- related irregularities which are still unaccounted. It is the need of the time to promote pharmacy profession for the betterment of the healthcare sector in country and the betterment of suffering humanity and all above to improve the quality of life of a patient.