

Educational requirements for new practice regulations and planning for 6 years entry-level pharmacy curriculum

Hyun Taek Shin¹, Pharm.D., Bong Kyu Yoo², Pharm.D., Ph.D.

¹ *College of Pharmacy, Sookmyung Women's University, Korea*

² *College of Pharmacy, Yeongnam University, Korea*

Although the pharmacy education has been maintained without significant changes over time, the pharmacy practice in Korea has been significantly changed since new prescription law separating prescribing and dispensing functions between physicians and pharmacists in drug use process was implemented in 2000. By the law, pharmacists are required to perform drug use evaluation prior to dispensing medications and also medication teaching and counselling for patients. However, the presumed professional activities of pharmacists to comply with these requirements have been sub optimal due to the insufficient pharmacy education and training system and many other reasons. As the result, the effectiveness of new prescription law has been questioned and debated by the public and other healthcare professionals.

According to the recommendations of Presidential Study Commission on Pharmacy, 6-year program of pharmacy curriculum, the implementation of Good Pharmacy Practice Standards for both inpatients and outpatients and Drug Utilization Review(DUR) program for improving medication safety are being planned by the governmental agency and pharmaceutical societies. Lately, the issue of medication safety has been raised by the congress and consequently by the public on behalf of recent national research report showing significant numbers of inappropriate drug prescriptions which may result in serious adverse drug reactions. By the recommendation of the congress, the national committee of DUR board was formulated to implement DUR program nationwide to assure medication safety and also improve the financial status of national health insurance by preventing inappropriate and unnecessary drug uses. Prospective and/or retrospective DUR practice will be mandatory for virtually all hospitals and pharmacies and also for drug claims adjudication by Health Insurance Review Agency in near future. Since the infrastructure of information technology and telecommunications is so advancing in the country, this program will be efficiently implemented with various types of sophisticated DUR systems including POS(point of sale) prospective DUR in community pharmacies and CPOE(computerized prescriber order entry) DUR in hospitals.

This new national program will require pharmacists use more professional knowledge bases and clinical skills for easy and efficient communications with medical professionals and therefore will create significant impact on over all feature and minutes of pharmacy practice toward more positive future of pharmacy profession in Korea as it has happened in US.

For pharmacy profession to cope with this dynamic advance toward improving the quality of pharmaceutical services in general, urgent renovation of pharmacy practice and education is strongly required for not only for bright future of pharmacy profession itself but also better patient care in our society.

Educational renovation for 6 years is now underway by the government. National consensus has been made by the efforts of Korean Pharmaceutical Association and Ministry of Health and

Welfare and Ministry of Education is now taking the role of finalizing the national policy and regulation for 6 year program. It is expected that the process of regulatory amendment will take another year and more efforts may be needed to clarify all other issues regarding social impact, opponent professional groups and curriculum contents. However, there is no doubt for this renovation of pharmacy education to be blocked by any reasons or oppositions. Most updated contents of the proposed model curriculum include additional didactic courses for clinical pharmacy, social pharmacy and biotechnology-applied sciences and practice training in hospitals, community pharmacies and pharmaceutical industries.

Along with curricular change, continuing education system for practicing pharmacists will be more expanded than before in contexts of contents and mandatory credit hours.