

PROFESSIONAL RELATIONS AND PRACTICES OF HOSPITAL PHARMACISTS

Hospital pharmacists play a vital role in ensuring the safe and effective use of medications within healthcare institutions. Their work involves collaboration with physicians, nurses, pharmacy technicians, researchers, and patients. They contribute to clinical services, education, administration, and continuous improvement of hospital pharmacy practices while upholding professional standards.

Pharmacist

A pharmacist is a licensed healthcare professional responsible for:

- ❖ Preparing and dispensing medications
- ❖ Counseling patients about their medicines
- ❖ Monitoring patient outcomes based on prescriptions from authorized prescribers

Pharmacists primarily work in **community pharmacies** and **hospital pharmacies** but may also engage in:

- Managed care
- Mail-order pharmacy
- Home healthcare
- Long-term care
- Nuclear pharmacy
- Academia and research
- Drug information, sales, and marketing

Pharmacists can also renew prescriptions, when appropriate, to support continuity of patient care.

Hospital Pharmacy

Hospital pharmacy is a **specialized department** that:

- Procures, stores, compounds, dispenses, manufactures, tests, and packages drugs
- Operates under the supervision of a qualified hospital pharmacist
- Ensures demand forecasting, quality control, and accurate record-keeping for manufacturing and dispensing

Hospital Pharmacist

Hospital pharmacists perform multiple roles, including:

- ❖ **Dispensing** oral and parenteral medications
- ❖ **Patient education** and counseling
- ❖ **Drug information services** for healthcare teams
- ❖ **Screening and monitoring** self-treatment with OTC products

- ❖ **Developing policies and procedures**
- ❖ **Purchasing drugs and supplies**
- ❖ **Monitoring drug utilization** within the hospital

They may also specialize in advanced clinical care areas such as critical care, oncology, and infectious disease management.

Pharmacy Technician

Pharmacy technicians support hospital pharmacists by:

- ❖ Delivering, stocking, and managing medication inventory
- ❖ Operating manual or computerized dispensing systems
- ❖ Assisting in compounding and packaging

Certification is often mandatory for pharmacy technicians working in hospital settings.

Professional Relations

With Medical Research Staff

- ✓ Provide drug information to support research on new drugs, new indications, and adverse reactions.

With Medical and Nursing Staff

- Collaborate to improve drug therapy outcomes
- Share information on:
 - New and investigational drugs
 - Side effects, risks, contraindications
 - Drug compatibility and stability
 - IV admixtures and dose calculations
 - Pharmacokinetic data and drug interactions
 - Effects of patient-specific factors (age, disease)

With the Hospital or Employing Institution

- Follow institutional policies
- Act in the best interest of the hospital
- Maintain professional independence

With the Pharmaceutical Industry

- Maintain ethical conduct
- Avoid promotional bias or inappropriate advertising influence

With the General Public and Patients

- ❖ Promote safe and rational drug use
- ❖ Educate patients
- ❖ Safeguard confidentiality
- ❖ Prioritize patient safety

Participation in Professional Associations

- ❖ Join professional bodies like **IPA** (Indian Pharmaceutical Association) and **IPGA** (Indian Pharmacy Graduates Association)
- ❖ Participate in events such as World Pharmacist Day and National Pharmacy Week
- ❖ Contribute to addressing professional challenges and shaping the future of pharmacy practice

Hospital Committees and Teaching

- ❖ Serve on pharmacy and therapeutics committees
- ❖ Organize public education programs
- ❖ Engage in teaching and training of healthcare staff and students

Hospital Pharmacist Role in Practice

Hospital pharmacists contribute to:

- ❖ **Patient Care:** Medication counseling, direct clinical services, participation in medical rounds
- ❖ **Administration:** Drug policy development, formulary management, quality assurance
- ❖ **Education:** Teaching nurses, medical interns, and pharmacy students
- ❖ **Research:** Conducting drug use evaluation, ADR monitoring, and clinical trials

They may also organize:

- ❖ Hospital pharmacy displays
- ❖ Pharmacy bulletins
- ❖ Drug rehabilitation and consultation programs

Guidelines for Practice in Hospital Pharmacy

Administration

- ❖ Licensing and regulatory compliance
- ❖ Staffing and after-hours services
- ❖ Policy and procedure manuals
- ❖ Pharmacy and Therapeutics Committee participation
- ❖ Medication error reporting and quality improvement initiatives

Essential Services

Hospital Pharmacy Premises

- Adequate facilities, equipment, library, and security

Patient-Oriented Pharmacy Services

- ❖ Medication order review and verification
- ❖ Counseling and documentation
- ❖ Maintaining continuity of care

Non-Patient Care Services

- ❖ Drug information services
- ❖ Drug use evaluations
- ❖ Interdisciplinary team participation

Drug Use Control

- ❖ Formulary management
- ❖ Procurement and inventory control
- ❖ Controlled drug handling and disposal
- ❖ Storage inspections
- ❖ Automated dispensing systems

Dispensing and Medication Labeling

- ❖ Inpatient and outpatient prescriptions
- ❖ Unit-dose packaging
- ❖ Controlled/monitored doses
- ❖ Emergency and after-hours medication services
- ❖ Return and delivery systems

Conclusion

Hospital pharmacists ensure:

- High standards of professional practice
- Optimal patient safety
- Effective collaboration with other healthcare professionals
- Quality management of hospital pharmacy services
- Their contribution is integral to the delivery of safe, efficient, and evidence-based healthcare.