



Are pharmacists really slowing the pharmacy practice change?

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Letter to Editor

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LETTER

As I read the article entitled "Are pharmacists the ultimate barrier to pharmacy practice change?",^[1] and as a PhD candidate majoring in clinical pharmacy, I felt that raising my opinion will be another step forward to the issue. Before stressing out the issue of pharmacy practice change, I would like to point out the basic mission of pharmacy practice. The mission of pharmacy practice is to provide medications and others health care products and services and to help people and the society to make the best use of them.^[2] Based on this mission, we should know that all practicing pharmacists are obliged to ensure that the service they provide to every patient is of appropriate. Over the past four decades there has been a trend for pharmacy practice to move away from its original focus on medicine supply towards a more inclusive focus on patient care.^[3] In the pharmacy change, the role of the pharmacist has improved considerably, from a compounder and supplier of pharmaceutical products towards a provider of services and information: patient care. When I quote Richard Hooker (1554-1600): 'Change is not made without inconvenience, even from worse to better.'^[4], we know changes are really important for making a step forward.

But if we look around, we will see many pharmacists who don't want to leave their comfortable zone, maybe due to lack of confidence or fear to embrace new challenges or responsibilities.^[1, 5] We should surely emphasize sometimes Pharmacy has focused more on improving efficiency for existing functions than on identifying and adapting to the changing needs of society.^[6] Therefore, the way pharmacists meet the present and future needs of society will impact the value of the profession.

I had the opportunity to work at the cardio-thoracic surgery department ward in a major tertiary referral teaching hospital for two years (2008-2010) as a clinical pharmacist trainee. I had much opportunity to work and relate with several health care providers and experienced pharmacists. I have seen many clinical pharmacists with their broad scope and depth of pharmacotherapy knowledge and clinical skills^[7], reaching the goal of seven-start pharmacist concept^[3]. The clinical pharmacists are a primary source of scientifically valid information and advice regarding the safe, appropriate, and cost-effective use of medications.^[8] Pharmacy practice takes place at different levels in a variety of settings; pharmacists are shaped by their personalities and professional socialization.^[9] Before pointing out the slowness of the pharmacy practice change to the pharmacists, we should first defeat the leadership



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challenges, because leadership towards practice takes place on
many levels, from individual to

organizations.^[10] During the past two years, I had the opportunity to visit some medical centres. The settings in which were working some of the pharmacists I met were beyond expectations. High quality settings can drive out the desire for enhancing always the vision and mission of pharmacists. I do believe pharmacists have the ability to provide high quality, accessible primary health care that improves patient care and outcomes^[10], and to be key components for the quicken positive pharmacy practice change.

Each pharmacy practice setting should create a high quality healthcare environment with a strong vision in order to enable its pharmacists to strengthen their competencies and to be a considerable impact for the positive pharmacy practice change.

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AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

Authors contributed equally to all aspects of the study.

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CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors declare that they have no competing interests