



Teaching hospitals of Nepal need to have own hospital pharmacy with pharmacy services

Mukhtar Ansari

National Medical College, PO Box 78, Birgunj, Nepal

Letter to Editor

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Corresponding Author:

Mukhtar Ansari

Department of Pharmacology

National Medical College, PO Box 78, Birgunj, Nepal

Tel No: +977 51 532260

Email: mukhtaransari@hotmail.com

Letter

Although hospital pharmacy practice is new to developing countries like Nepal, the concept is well established in developed nations. Hospital pharmacy and retail pharmacy located inside the hospital premises are entirely different. The latter is simply concerned with dispensing prescription and Over the Counter (OTC) medicines to the patients or patient parties. However, hospital pharmacy is a patient oriented concept responsible for advising healthcare professionals and patients on safe, effective and efficient use of medicines. Hospital pharmacy practice is accountable for monitoring medicine and related activities such as patient counselling and compliance, drug information, pharmacovigilance, purchase and inventory control, storage of medicines, good dispensing practices; ward round and clinical pharmacy practices etc.).^[1]

In Nepal, the concept of hospital pharmacy was introduced by United Mission to Nepal at the Shanta Bhawan (presently Patan Hospital) and subsequently at Tansen Hospital, Palpa.^[2] Currently, eighteen teaching hospitals attached with medical colleges are fully functional and majority of them do not have hospital pharmacy services.^[3] However, interestingly every teaching hospital has retail pharmacy either owned or rented. Furthermore, dispensing of medicines in such retail pharmacies is performed by non professionals. This explicitly indicates that either owner or management team of teaching hospitals are unaware of or do not want to bother about hospital pharmacy services in their hospitals, but rather get more profit through selling medicines and surgical items. Providing quality healthcare is not in ones hand but a collective effort of prescribers (doctors),

pharmacists (not the dispensers!) and administrators (nurses).

At present, only few teaching hospitals in Nepal such as Tribhuvan University Teaching Hospital (TUTH), Kathmandu University Teaching Hospital (Dhulikhel Hospital), Manipal Teaching Hospital and KIST Teaching Hospital are facilitated with functional hospital pharmacy services which significantly contribute toward providing quality healthcare to the patients.^[2] The Ministry of Health and Population, Government of Nepal has already formulated a guideline regarding quality operation of health institutions and hospital pharmacy through its Private Health Institutions Operation Guidelines 2005. However, in terms of hospital pharmacy, this guideline also represents the modified retail pharmacy inside hospital premises but not the hospital pharmacy.^[4] Hence, there is an urgent need of revising the Ministry's guideline with emphasis to the concept of hospital pharmacy in teaching hospitals as well as other secondary or tertiary care hospitals of Nepal.

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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.