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## Commentary

# Management education within pharmacy curricula: A need for innovation

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## ABSTRACT

*Objective:* To encourage the academy to pursue innovative management education strategies within pharmacy curricula and highlight these experiences in a scholarly dialogue. *Summary:* Management has often been a dreaded, dry, and often neglected aspect of pharmacy curricula. With the release of Center for Advancement of Pharmacy Education (CAPE) Educational Outcomes 2013 as well as Entry-Level Competencies Needed for Community Pharmacy Practice by National Association of Chain Drug Stores (NACDS) Foundation, National Community Pharmacists Association (NCPA), and Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education (ACPE) in 2012, managerial skills have seen a new emphasis in pharmacy education. Further, management has greater emphasis within ACPE “Standards 2016” through adoption of CAPE Educational Outcomes 2013 into the standards. Previous literature has shown success of innovative learning strategies in management education such as active learning, use of popular television shows, and emotional intelligence. The academy must build a more extensive scholarly body of work highlighting successful educational strategies to engage pharmacy students in an often-dreaded subject through applying the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning.

## Introduction

With the release of the Center for Advancement of Pharmacy Education (CAPE) Educational Outcomes 2013<sup>1</sup> and Entry-Level Competencies Needed for Community Pharmacy Practice<sup>2</sup> [National Association of Chain Drug Stores (NACDS), National Community Pharmacists Association (NCPA), and Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education (ACPE)] in 2012, management education and associated skills to be an effective manager have a new emphasis in pharmacy education. Within the CAPE Educational Outcomes 2013, many of the learning objectives are tied into skills, knowledge, or functions of a manager within the profession of pharmacy: 2.2 medication use systems management, 3.1 problem solving, 3.4 interprofessional collaboration, 3.6 communication, 4.1 self-awareness, 4.3 innovation and entrepreneurship, and 4.4 professionalism.<sup>1</sup> The CAPE Educational Outcomes 2013 have become part of accreditation standards for schools and colleges of pharmacy with the ACPE “Standards 2016,” being addressed in [Section 1](#), Standard 4 (Personal and Professional Development) as well as Appendix 1 (Required Elements of the Didactic Doctor of Pharmacy Curriculum).<sup>3</sup> Within the Entry-Level Competencies Needed for Community Practice, many of the seven core competencies relate to management skills: communication skills, dispensing systems management, business management, and legal considerations.<sup>2</sup>

As the profession has adopted the Doctor of Pharmacy as the entry-level degree for the practice of pharmacy, emphasis on educational development has focused on clinical topics and preparing students for direct patient care roles. As that emphasis has

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increased, management education appears to have taken a backseat within educational development and research. This is anecdotally noted in literature highlighting the impetus for innovation within management courses and can be argued due to the stark contrast in volume surrounding educational innovations described in the literature between therapeutics-related topics and management-related topics.<sup>4,5</sup> As an educator, student pharmacists have not seemed to be engaged or do not see the relevance of management education. As a student pharmacist, it was challenging to see the critical importance of managerial efficiency to practice pharmacy at a high-level. In Canada, a required undergraduate pharmacy management course was redesigned using a self-directed learning model after noting a similar sentiment, that student pharmacists did not realize the relevance of management within pharmacy practice until they entered practice.<sup>5</sup> Latif<sup>6</sup> has previously recognized that for pharmacists to move towards a patient-centered practice model, student pharmacists must graduate competent in management of not only patients' drug therapy and conditions, but also in the pharmacy personnel who work within the pharmacy or their practice setting. The academy must develop recognition within student pharmacists that optimal managerial capabilities are required to possess optimal patient-care skills.

## Perspective

As a new practitioner, I have struggled with management-related functions in my work as a community pharmacist, especially during residency. Within a few months of practicing, pharmacotherapy knowledge, disease state management, and appropriate patient counseling came fairly naturally. An adequate foundation was laid to enable me to care for my patients, and my residency program was refining and enhancing that skills set. I knew how to utilize drug information resources effectively when I was unsure, reassuring my competence in providing patient care. However, when presented with mounting conflict between pharmacy technicians, ensuring compliance with state and federal regulations, design of staffing schedules, and hiring and evaluating employees, I felt less prepared and effective in my roles and responsibilities. Similar evidence can be seen within the literature. Recently, a community pharmacy chain revised its internship program after realizing that graduates were not comfortable or confident in their abilities to operate the pharmacy following graduation. As a result, a 10-week internship program was developed, where many management topics were introduced including project management, audits, record keeping, team building, laws, and ethics.<sup>7</sup>

A model for teaching management skills to pharmacy students has been developed, pulling from the vast evidence available within business literature.<sup>8</sup> In doing this, the assumption is made that management skills are transferable from one setting to another. For the vast majority of management skills used, that is most likely accurate; however, the business model within pharmacy practice and healthcare likely presents unique challenges. Previous literature has established which managerial skills are perceived to be important by practicing health-system managers; however, there is a lack of literature for how to teach these skills relevant to that setting in both didactic and experiential curricula.<sup>9</sup> When hiring a new pharmacy graduate, it has been identified that different characteristics are valued by community and health-system settings when hiring new graduates.<sup>10</sup> Management faculty should take this into consideration, efforts should be made to teach managerial competencies necessary for both health-system and community pharmacy.

Within Latif's model for teaching management skills, there are many innovative and practical means to instill management skills within pharmacy students: skills assessment through role play, skills analysis through cases, and skills practice through simulation, exercises, and role play.<sup>8</sup> While this model was published over a decade ago, there is minimal literature showing uptake of these methods within curricula and a lack of establishment of validated surveys, rubrics, cases, or methods for these active-learning based strategies. Within another publication, Latif<sup>6</sup> has described utilization of emotional intelligence in a management curriculum with student feedback reflecting greater awareness about how their actions and decisions allow for success as a pharmacist and manager, with positive views of the course.

A few curricular innovations have been assessed and published within the literature that highlight innovative strategies for teaching managerial skills and functions. Simulation of operations of a pharmacy business was found to show some improvement in student pharmacists' knowledge and understanding of business management skills (i.e. inventory management, balance sheets, cash flow statements, and income statements).<sup>11</sup> Students were overall positive in their views of the simulation and slightly agreed it enhanced comprehension of pharmacy management concepts.<sup>11</sup> This study also found that the only topic were students had exposure during Introductory Pharmacy Practice Experiences (IPPEs) or internship experience was inventory management.<sup>11</sup> Another management educator utilized a popular television show, *The Office*, within a lecture on organization behavioral concepts (i.e. motivation and performance, conflict, employee retention and turnover, and managerial integrity) to highlight these concepts. This approach was enjoyed by the students, made the points of the lecture easier to understand and more interesting, and the lecture was found to be more interesting than other lectures within the management course.<sup>4</sup>

Lastly, a guide has been published for incorporating business management and human resources management education within community pharmacies; however, this guide provides learning activities suitable for Advanced Pharmacy Practice Experiences (APPEs).<sup>12</sup> The academy must identify new and effective methods for didactic instruction of management skills prior to APPEs. Within Latif's model for teaching effective management skills, it was acknowledged that there is a lack of evidence and knowledge regarding which skills are necessary for a pharmacist to be an effective manager.<sup>8</sup> Since this publication, there has not been a vast increase in knowledge regarding this skill set, especially relating to community and ambulatory care practices.

## Implications

As an academy, development and evaluation of innovative educational methods for management education must become an area of greater focus. Management skills are essential skills for the profession that seem to have become a secondary focus as the academy

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