

12TH ANNUAL PHARMA MIDDLE EAST CONGRESS

September 25-26, 2017 Dubai, UAE

Accreditation of pharmacy programs: A need or a treat?

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Pharmacists' roles are evolving from that of compounder and dispenser of medicines to that of medicines expert within a multidisciplinary health care team. A coordinated and multidisciplinary effort to provide planning, training and education is needed in order to prepare adequate and well-trained pharmacists for such roles. Pharmacy education refers to the educational design and capacity to develop a diversity of settings (e.g. community, hospital, research and development, academia). Nowadays many schools of pharmacy are pursuing accreditation to make sure that different learning strategies, types of scientific courses, training skills, assessment methods and professionalism, offered in the program are aligned with the latest international standards and developments in pharmacy education and that their graduates are committed to quality in health care services. In addition, accreditation would ensure that education provided by the school meets acceptable levels of quality. The accreditation process is a means of peer review and professional self-regulation. It is intended to strengthen and sustain the quality and integrity of the school, confirming that it is worthy of public confidence. While this process is mandated, the self-study itself is largely an internal process that presents the school with an invaluable opportunity to analyze how it is conducting its affairs, its strength and weaknesses and where to improve, where necessary. The school's possession of accredited status can be very reassuring to the community, researchers, stakeholders and the job market. It is an indication that the school offers an education of quality. International accreditation shows that an institution is serious about setting, achieving and maintaining high standards. The Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education (ACPE) in the USA occupies the prime worldwide position for accrediting pharmacy programs. Meanwhile, in Jordan, there is national accrediting body, namely, the Higher Education Accreditation Commission (HEAC). The two programs (BSc and Pharm D) provided by School of Pharmacy, University of Jordan accredited nationally and the school got the international accreditation through the ACPE in June 2016.

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