

Ideal and Effective Preceptor in Pharmacy Practice

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Pharmacy profession has been dramatically changed from drug oriented to patient oriented profession. We are in the era of pharmacy practice. Pharmacists are considered a key member in the multidisciplinary team. They are involved in patient care, attending the round with physicians on daily bases, provide drug information to health care professionals, review patient's files, identify the clinical problems and prioritize problems according to severity. In addition they adjust medication doses based on kidney function and liver function, educate patients about their medications, look for drug interaction, provide recommendations, involved in drug selection and tailor treatment plan on individual bases.

Pharmacy students need to be educated and trained in a manner makes them able to compete and serve the society in high capacity and suitable framework that match the current era. Teaching is an art which is interesting but at the same time challenging. The preceptor plays a vital role in the development of intern pharmacists. Two major factors determine the behaviour of the preceptors, the values they possess and the information they know. Preceptors will behave differently depending on their value. Effective preceptors are able to create a learning motivating atmosphere, provide appropriate opportunities to students, and develop honest and trusting relationship. Students might not recognize these opportunities but can learn from communication and interactions [1-4].

During the first day of rotation, preceptors should acquaint students with different locations in the hospital, introduce them to staff and outline the site's policy & procedure as confidentiality, and safety procedures. Preceptors should outline expectations, activities, duties and responsibilities for the students during their rotation and discuss the standard goals and objective.

Preceptors for pharmacy experiential education or pharmacy intern are key members in pharmacy education. Without the preceptor's guidance and support students will be overwhelmed at the clinical site. Students are unique individuals who needs caring and stimulating atmosphere. Some students might face difficulties as becoming anxious, lack confidence and not able to communicate with health care professionals. Some students are silent learners. They refrain from asking for help to understand. This might be related to lack of confidence or student feeling afraid of appearing in competent. Such students are in need for pharmacists to coach, mentor and guide their interaction with health care professionals. Preceptors provide students with individualized attention and feedback, guide students to make decisions. Proper guidance of the preceptors to pharmacy students will facilitate their personal and professional growth and develop critical thinking skills necessary for pharmacy practice [5].

Preceptors will train pharmacy students to provide excellent patient care and improve the outcome of patient health care. Educating pharmacy students will enhance patient care initiatives and add value, e.g. education about medication therapy management, medication reconciliation, initiating project to improve pharmaceutical services and patient care and conducting research.

Preceptors should help students to identify areas of interest, provide the opportunities to practice their skills in those areas, prompted students to expand their knowledge they previously taught in school and provide thoughtful and timely responses to students work. Preceptors should provide students with opportunities to exercise their professional judgment, help them to implement the expanded scope of practice in the pharmacy, including providing information sessions on the expanded scope to all pharmacy members and other health care professionals as physicians and nurses. Consequently students will be able to provide these services with confidence [6].

Preceptors should ensure the development of students' clinical skills and professional judgment in a meaningful way. Preceptors should be dedicated to the profession and has consistent ability to look for ways to maximize opportunities to provide patient care. This will inspire students to retain their enthusiasm and momentum. Preceptors should approach the challenges that have faced the profession in a positive manner to inspire future pharmacists in the same way. Preceptors should deal with students in a kind and professional way so they will not be afraid and encourage them to voice their thoughts and ideas on how to improve patient care and the placement site and to ask questions during the rotation.

Preceptor development programs are essential to ensure that these pharmacists are prepared for their role coaching students during their experiential education programs and providing the knowledge, skills and resources required to efficiently and effectively mentor pharmacy students.

The quality of the experiential practice sites are considered as important factor for a successful rotation as well. Students need a place with privacy for meeting and discussion with the preceptor, need access to drug information resources, need a place to work on their projects and assigned activities.

In conclusion, preceptors are considered as teachers, facilitators and mentors. They facilitate the learning process for the students and provide an environment suitable for the development of the knowledge, skills, attitude and behaviours essential for pharmacy professionals. The effective role-model demonstrates responsibility to the profession. The patient care and safety must remain primary concerns but preceptors have to spend quality time with students as well [7-9].

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