

Key findings of the FIP Advanced Practice and Specialisation in Pharmacy: Global Report

for FIP members
and stakeholders

2015

Copyright © 2015 International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP)

“As current health systems and patient care continue to evolve in complexity and challenge, there is more demand for pharmacists to provide complex services and to take on roles which are extended specialised and more advanced than current entry level scope of practice”.

This trend is going to continue as the focus on improving patient health outcomes continues. Pharmacists are expected to have professional expertise to effectively manage complex patient cases and complex combinations of medicines.

This document sets out the key findings of the *Advanced Practice and Specialisation in Pharmacy: Global Report, 2015* (available at www.fip.org/educationreports). The International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP) and FIP Education Initiative have made a commitment to ensure that reports and communications to members are purposeful and useful. The intention of this document is to provide helpful guidance and navigation for our FIP stakeholders and to inspire our member organisations to consider strategy development and actions at national level, and to enable them to prepare briefings and communiqués for their own networks and stakeholders. We have signposted key messages, which we think are of most relevance for different stakeholders.

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS AND REGULATORY AUTHORITIES

The global trend is for pharmacy practice to continue to become a more clinical, patient-facing profession, with enhanced responsibilities and accountabilities for pharmaceutical care in clinical and domestic environments. Therefore the approaches to advanced practice and specialisation imply the need for programmes of education/professional development, which must to be adjusted according to country needs.

The role of pharmacy regulators and pharmaceutical professional bodies and associations were identified as key supporters for advanced practice and specialisation programmes and/or titles/definitions within the countries surveyed (table 4 and 5, page 14). Forty-eight countries and territories were surveyed to obtain information concerning specialisation and advanced practice policies and implementation at country level. Policies on both tended to be broad and in some cases complex where even terminology defining specialisation and advanced practice were not consistent and in some cases not clearly defined.

For the purpose of the report “specialisation” means advanced practice with narrow scope; and “advanced practice” means overt practice (beyond foundation or initial registration) with a broad scope of practice.

The report maps out a wide range of national initiatives worldwide demonstrated in a series of case studies (17 countries – part 4, page 17 onwards) illustrating trends and innovations in policy development related to specialisation and advancement.

There are no evident associations with having country level definitions of specialisation or advanced practice and with pharmacist capacity; it seems workforce size does not seem to determine policy development in this area. This is an important finding, as professional leadership associations who are seeking partnership engagement with other countries should not worry about having a matched workforce size for mutual working partnerships.

Key findings in the report include:

- Practitioner developmental/competency frameworks are guiding the workforce development of advanced and specialised practice in a number of countries.
- A few countries indicated that such frameworks had been adapted from the work and evidences of other countries, highlighting the value of knowing and adapting models from other countries (for example the Australia, UK, Philippines, Portugal and Singapore case studies – pages 22, 29, 44, 46 and 49). National developmental/competency frameworks – similar to the FIP Global Competency Framework v1 (www.fip.org/pe_resources) – ideally linked with the concept of “professional curricula” (a curriculum encompasses the purposes, knowledge, evaluations, skills and experiences needed to define subject specific practice in any particular area), is a key workforce development activity in order to progress professional role enhancement and pharmaceutical service delivery.
- Professional associations can position and play a key role in the discussion, development and implementation at national levels (for example the Australia, UK and Switzerland case studies – pages 22, 29, 57).

Many professional associations are developing and adopting competency-based approaches to workforce development, clearly describing the scope of practice in terms of knowledge, behaviours and values. Looking at the case studies presented in this report allows associations and regulators to:

- Review progress on requirements for CPD/CE; the supporting regulation; professional recognition and lessons learned that can help them in shaping policies, guidelines and regulations when developing or adjusting a national system for specialisation and/or advanced practice.
- Discover tools, frameworks and support mechanisms to support specialisation and advancement.
- Align with national strategies for healthcare services and delivery.

Pharmaceutical professional associations have a crucial role to play in order to define the competences required for all pharmacists to practice in current and new emerging scopes of practice and to help individual pharmacists to link developmental frameworks with their personal needs assessment.

EMPLOYERS

Financial pressures, changing reimbursement and scope of practice structures are forcing some employers to change their pharmacist offering to patients. In many cases the business of pharmacy is looking for ways to compete on services as well as price.

The report *Advanced Practice and Specialization in Pharmacy: Global Report* offers insight for employers when considering specialist or advanced practice offerings in their business.

Some elements to be considered include:

- In order to utilise pharmacists to their full potential as advanced practitioners, the development of relevant competencies, which their staff are required to meet, is essential.
- Consideration should be given to give help and support for practitioners to identify their learning gaps and skills needed in their practice to improve performance.
- When specialisation and/or advanced practice systems are established, employers can rely on these systems to ensure that their employers have clearly defined competencies; it may facilitate recruitment.
- A competent pharmacist will be able to provide the highest quality of healthcare to their patients, with a lower rate of medication errors, leading to enhanced health outcomes and patient satisfaction.

A pharmacist who possesses credentials that describe their quality of competence and capability will help support recognition by other healthcare professionals of the expertise of advanced practice pharmacists.

INDIVIDUAL PHARMACISTS

Advancement in pharmacy practice is becoming a requirement to fulfil the increasing needs of patients in the changing healthcare landscape. Pharmacists working at a recognised level of advancement, with a higher set of competencies, improve and safeguard patient safety and more effectively manage complexity in many areas of expert thus helping to fulfil some of these needs.

Professional recognition of advanced practice improves acceptance by other colleagues in the clinical team, but also in other areas of practice such as research, education and management (e.g. prescribing rights – table 6, page 15). It also provides role models and a source of mentorship for novice and less experienced pharmacists, including pre-service or pre-registration pharmacists.

There is a close association in countries with formal professional recognition processes in place (for specialisation and advancement) and acknowledgement of the tangible benefits for workforce access to specialisation and advancement. The benefits include enhanced career pathways, enhanced remuneration for practitioners and enhanced individual esteem and prestige (Table 7, page 16).

For individual pharmacists the report provides an overview of current practice in several countries, where they can seek more information to progress their own career pathway; where expertise (specialisation or advanced practice) is more visible, through post-nominal, helping to build credibility and trust in the profession (Part 3, Section 3.5 – page 15).

FOR ALL STAKEHOLDERS: A LEARNING

Overview of terminology and nomenclature

A key component of data gathering for this report, was a collation from 18 case studies (covering 17 countries) indicating significant differences in the understanding and usage of common terms. Global agreement on terminology and definitions is an important early step necessary for shared understanding of issues surrounding advanced practice and specialisation.

For this report no attempt has been made to harmonise these definitions, or to suggest global definitions; however FIPed will continue to investigate how to contribute to a better common understanding of terminology any language in this area.

CONCLUSIONS

As pharmacists continue to become more clinically-oriented health professionals, with enhanced responsibilities and accountabilities for pharmaceutical care clear pathways for workforce development, coupled with professional recognition and credentialing of practitioners, is an important consideration. This represents a clear opportunity for transnational collaboration and further opportunities for transnational recognition of advanced capabilities for the pharmacy workforce.

A clear demonstration and assurance of competence and capability that is commensurate with advanced and expert practice is a clear message to civil society that pharmacists possess this expertise; professional recognition, credentialing and quality assured specialisation are part of this demonstration of competence and capability. It is in the interest of patients, health systems and our profession that we develop a common and shared understanding of what we mean by “specialisation” and by “advanced practice”. This is a key driver for future workforce development.

The FIPed is supported by the FIPed Corporate Roundtable on Education members: GlaxoSmithKline, Pfizer, McCann Health, the Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers' Associations of Japan and the Nagai Foundation.

For further information: education@fip.org
or visit <http://www.fip.org/education>