



## THE ADDITIONAL ONE YEAR PRE-REGISTRATION WORKLOAD ON PHARMACY GRADUATES: AN IRRATIONAL APPROACH

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Dear Editor

The curriculum of Pharm. D, a five year degree program was imposed by the Pakistan Pharmacy Council in 2004. Its revision was underway since April 2010 by the curriculum committee of the Pakistan Pharmacy Council and Higher Education Commission. Now, the final version of the draft is ready to be implemented, though there are plenty of shortcomings. Instead of going in detail, the present article is being penned to draw the attention of signatories of the draft of the curriculum to look into the matter of pre-registration additional one year training in various areas of pharmacy profession after getting the Pharm. D degree. The students, parents and academia have several reservations for this additional year, some of which are given herein.

1. **Legal issue:** The imposition of additional one year training before registration of pharmacy graduates is a violation of the section 25 (1) (a), (b) and (c) of The Pharmacy Act 1967, which describes the eligibility criterion for the registration of pharmacists in various categories (Khan, 2008a). Therefore, pharmacy graduates need not be deprived of their right to be registered in category "A" as per law.
2. **Increase in duration of Pharm. D programme:** Under the prevailing financial situation in the country, the increase in duration, an additional 6<sup>th</sup> year will be a burden on the poor nation. Moreover, to spend 6 years just for a graduation degree is not justified and will further worsen the economic status of the community.
3. **Production of large number of pharmacy graduates:** In present scenario both the public and private sector universities are producing pharmacy graduates much more than the number of jobs

available in public and private sectors. As a result of this an overwhelming majority of pharmacy graduates are unemployed, and the same is reported by Hussain *et al.* (2006).

4. **Agreement for one year pre-registration training:** At present there is no agreement or legal binding on the pharmaceutical industries, hospitals, community pharmacies and health authorities on providing this one year training attachment. The students who have to travel from far-off areas to major cities for training; hence, hostel accommodation will be a big problem for them.
5. **Unnecessary binding on students:** Imposition of additional one year pre-registration training will be an unnecessary binding on the students willing to adopt teaching job, governmental job, carrier abroad or pursue higher education after their graduation.
6. **Cost of attachment:** It is not clear that whether this one year attachment is paid or unpaid, and if paid then who will bear the cost of this attachment? In some countries, pre-registration training is mandatory and instituted to compensate the resource deficiency, structured and well-paid by the state.

Pakistan Pharmacy Council should not give an impression that it is exercising its powers to benefit its members and other allies, ignoring the profession. The council is making new laws/SROs for the qualification required to be the part of pharmacy academia and imposing inspection/enrolment fee, etc. (Inspection and Recognition, 2009). Contrary to this, the council is violating the guidelines of the law regarding the titles of the subjects (Khan, 2005). Additionally, the council is seemed to be indifferent to make amendments in the Pharmacy Act 1967 particularly in the provisions

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regarding the registration of pharmacists in three categories, A, B and C.

It will be interesting to know that pharmacist registered in category A has to study for 5 years after 12 years of education, whereas, pharmacist registered in category B needs not to have any formal training, a pharmacist working in government sector can recommend 5 persons to take the examination by the provincial council or only two year training after 10 year education. The mere difference between these two categories is that a pharmacist registered in category B cannot officially sell drugs mentioned in Schedule G of Punjab Drug Rules (Khan and Asad, 2008b). While preparing the curriculum or changing the title of degree, the council is following the advanced countries, but totally ignoring that pharmacy assistant is not eligible to practice anywhere in the world, except this country.

The policy making authorities and the Pakistan Pharmacy Council are required to take steps to amend the provisions of the Pharmacy Act 1967 regarding the registration of pharmacists in various categories. There should be only one pharmacist who is having bachelor degree in pharmacy to provide better pharmaceutical care to the ailing community and stop brain drain from the country.

We believe that, being custodian of the pharmacy profession, a great responsibility lies on the shoulder of the members of the Pakistan Pharmacy Council to save and uplift the deteriorating pharmacy profession<sup>1</sup> in Pakistan. Therefore, there is a dire need of taking reforming steps to align the pharmacy education and practices at par with the rest of the world by taking various stakeholders into confidence.

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