

DRUG INFORMATION CENTRE – AN OVERVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Drug information specialists are pharmacists who work in drug information service. They provide information on drugs, toxicology and poisons to the community. Drug information specialists can also work with hospitals, medical providers and staff to provide information on drugs. Drug information services can be found in many colleges and universities and serve as a residency foundation for pharmacists who wish to specialise in drug information. This article discuss about the drug information service and drug information specialists.

KEYWORDS: Drug Information service, Drug Information Specialists

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INTRODUCTION

Drug information is the provision of written and/or verbal information about drugs and drug therapy in response to a request from other healthcare providing organizations, committees, patients, and public community. Drug information services refer to the activities undertaken by pharmacists in providing information to drug use. Drug information centre provides in-depth, unbiased source of crucial drug information to meet needs of the practicing physicians, pharmacists and other health care professionals.^[1]

In 1962, the first drug information centre was opened at the university of Kentucky Medical Centre and was intended was intended to be utilised as a source of selected, comprehensive drug information for staff physicians, which allowed them to evaluate and compare drugs besides catering to the information needed for nursing staff.^[1]

DRUG INFORMATION SERVICES

- Information about drugs
- Poison management information
- Patient education service
- Assistance on drug usage in patients
- Professional assistance for investigation in drug usage
- Drug related information to hospital staff
- Reporting and investigating ADR

TRAINING IN DRUG INFORMATION PRACTICE

Drug information specialists are pharmacists whose primary responsibility is the provision of drug information. The American Society of Health-System Pharmacists (ASHP) provides residency accreditation in drug information. There are currently 31 ASHP-accredited drug

information specialty residencies located throughout the united states.^[2]

AN UNDERUTILIZED RESOURCE

Drug information specialists are trained to provide clear, concise, and accurate drug information in a variety of settings. Not only do they provide quality service, but pharmacist-provided drug information, adverse-drug-reaction monitoring, and formulary management have been associated with significant reductions in the total cost of care in hospital settings, as well as reductions in patient deaths.⁽³⁾ Today, the Internet provides a plethora of information for both health care professionals and their patients. Many practitioners probably use the Internet when seeking answers to questions. However, at least one study judged significantly more responses obtained from a drug information centre as accurate when compared with those received from a Usenet newsgroup.⁽⁴⁾

DRUG INFORMATION SPECIALISTS

A drug information specialist is a pharmacist who has completed a particular residency in a clinical setting to obtain knowledge to work in a drug information setting. All pharmacists provide some level of drug information, whether to other clinicians or to patients. In fact, a recent survey found that 96.4% of 491 hospitals have staff pharmacists who routinely answer drug information questions.⁽⁵⁾ and a separate survey of colleges of pharmacy showed that 89% of first professional pharmacy degree programs require at least one didactic course in drug information.⁽⁶⁾ While most pharmacists are equipped with knowledge regarding the practice of drug information, the ever-expanding list of pharmaceuticals, as well as the overwhelming amount of clinical data, makes it difficult for practitioners to stay

current with recent developments. This also results in the need for more advanced problem-solving skills in order to answer the more complex questions that challenge practitioners today.

Although drug information is readily available in books and drug databases accessed via the Internet or personal digital assistants, there are still some situations in which verbal communication with a knowledgeable source is often the quickest strategy for answering clinical questions about medications. A non-commercial, pharmacist-operated drug information service can be a useful information alternative that offers a personalized approach.

The primary goal of a drug information service is to improve patient care by providing objective and unbiased information for drug-related questions. Drug information services are facilities or personnel dedicated to and specializing in the provision of written or oral information about drugs and pharmacotherapy, in response to a request from other health care professionals, organizations, committees, or patients. A drug information expert can estimate how much time may be necessary to perform the research, consider the urgency of the requestor, and prioritize requests. There is no special accreditation or licensing for drug information services; it is the pharmacist who is licensed.

Drug information is often cited as the first clinical pharmacy function to have developed in U.S. hospitals, and the specialized skill set needed for drug information practice is taught in nationally accredited postdoctoral pharmacy residencies across the country. Drug information specialists have the literature evaluation skills necessary for providing evidence-based recommendations, and they are experts at utilizing various sources of information.

Drug information services are financially supported by a university, the state, or a hospital.⁽⁷⁾

CONCLUSION

Drug information centres are regarded as a gateway of drug information. The future of drug information centres in India lies in the quality of service, credibility among users and the evaluation of its progress. The future of clinical pharmacy and drug information centre is very bright so the government, private hospitals and regulatory bodies should come forward to establish more number of drug information centres in future time so that clinical pharmacist and drug information centre can work to locate the quality in community. Drug information specialists are a valuable resource available to support appropriate drug use and improve quality of patient care. New practitioners are urged to take advantage of the expertise of drug information specialists, either within or outside of their own institutions.

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