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Short communication

Professional practice in pharmacist education – experience in West Balkan pharmacy schools

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Introduction

Contemporary education of health professionals (medicine, pharmacy, dentistry and nursery) is increasingly determined also by the imperative to address the health needs of the community that they serve (ReFEEHS Project, 2016). Pharmacy is strong regulated health professions, must demonstrate that their education prepares them for interprofessional, collaborative, people-centered practice and therefore experiential education (EE) (teaching and learning activities) that enable this practice will fundamentally influence the design of their educational programmes. The term "experiential education" (EE) is used to denote a supervised structured or semi-structured teaching and learning activities that take place in a practice setting and involves real-life situations and inter-personal interactions with patients, caregivers, as well as with other health professionals (Kovačević et al., 2022). Pharmacy professional practice/clinical experience (PPP) have been mandatory in curricula according to EU Directive 2005/26 (European Parliament and Council of the European Union, 2005). The pharmacy curricula design to achived competent pharmacist that valuable to patients health and society (World Health Organization, 2013).

The aim of this research is observe important elements of structure and process of pharmacy student professional practice (PPP) (experience education EE) and compare the resources across the West Balkan pharmacy schools.

Materials and Methods

The cross - sectional web study was design and perform by the searching avialbale internet data souces at the sample of twelwe public universitas across the West Balkan region. The following Pharmacy School, Pharmacy Study programm from public universities: in Serbia (University of Belgrade (UBGD), University of Kragujevac (UKG), University of Niš (UNI) and University of Novi Sad (UNS); in North Macedonia (University Ss Cyril and Methodius in Skopje (UKIM); Goce Delcev University, Štip (GDU); in Montenegro (University of Montenegro (UM), Podgorica); in Albania (University of Medicine,Tirana (UMT); in Bosnia and Hercegovina (University of Sarajevo (USA), University of Tuzla (UTZ), University of Mostar (SUM), University of Banja Luka (UBL) was included. All data colected manualy, and analised quantiative and qualitative from perspective of EE Data was organised and analised by Qualty concept of SPO (Stucture, Proces, Outcomes). As Structure duration of Pharamcy graduate program, EE curiculum, placement; and as Process – perceptors/metors ; assesment/evaluation of PPP.

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Results and Discussion

In data analyse, we included only the Study program of pharmacy with 300 ESPB. At the majority schools the PPP was performed at the last-fifth year of study (usualty at the X semester) with different extent, from 4 ESPB (UNS) to 30 ESPB (GDU,UTZ,USA); the average value 21 ESPB.The usualy the duration of PPP was fiftheen weeks (one school semester), but in BiH Pharmacy schools the 6 months (one months in hospital pharmacy + five months in public pharmacy) has been activated in new cuuricula and performed or just in process of student EE. This is the one of the outcomes of ERASMUS+ project named „Innovating quality assessment tools for pharmacy studies in Bosnia and Herzegovina" (2021-2023) (IQPharm Project, 2026). The EE curriculum almost all schools include the placement (public pharmacy, hospital pharmacy), unless with the UM include the more placement such as pharm marketing department, regulatory body placement. The placements we can recognized as teaching institution and clear regulation for process and outcomes necessary between the Academia and health teaching institution. This regulation includes the preceptor's (enrolment, training, method of mentors), faculty coordinator of PPP, and assessment method. Modern method of evaluation/assessment of clinical competence is Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE) that has been used by BiH Pharmacy schools (from the 2023^{ed}), as well as UBGD (from the 2018^{in}).

Regarding the process of PPP and quality improvement, the academy practice suggested initiating EE early in the pharmacy program, instituting rotations, preceptor's/mentors education at the competence framework that providing opportunities for students to assume increasing responsibility for patient care.

Conclusion

Pharmacy professional practice/clinical experience (PPP, EE) at the sample of West Balkan Pharmacy shools shown that initensive activites performed, particularly with support of ERASMUS + projects, and the cappacity of the country was different. The crutial element of structure and process is placement and perceptors that need to bee recognised by professional society and legislative (health and education) of the each country. Digital technology tools in administration and assessment addressing challenges for better prepare pharmacy learners to practitioners of the future. Pharmacy preceptors, leaders, and educators have been slow to change their approach to experiential education.

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