

Needs Assessment and Gap Analysis for the Integration of a Regulatory Pharmacy Course in the Philippine Pharmacy Curriculum

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Globally, regulatory pharmacy entails an important role in ensuring the safety and efficacy of pharmaceutical products. In 2021, the Commission on Higher Education implemented the new BS Pharmacy curriculum in the Philippines which includes an experiential pharmacy practice in regulatory pharmacy. However, the latest curriculum does not include a separate regulatory pharmacy course. This study aimed to determine the possible gaps in the theory-to-practice of regulatory pharmacy to justify the need for the implementation of a regulatory pharmacy course. A descriptive-evaluative research design separated into three phases was employed. The first phase involved a two-part focus group discussion (FGD) with regulatory pharmacists and pharmacy educators through a facilitated online structured interview. Data collected from the FGDs were subjected to thematic analysis. The second phase involved content analysis of the baseline pharmacy course syllabi. The third phase involved triangulation of the results of the earlier phases to perform the gap analysis and needs assessment. Findings revealed that there are gaps between the current pharmacy education curriculum and the demands of the regulatory pharmacy industry. Prominent gaps were found in the lack of topics covering dossier preparation, policy-making, Ad Standards Council guidelines, and regulations of veterinary products and non-drug products. The present curriculum also does not have dedicated outcomes for students to demonstrate skills in computer technology use and technical writing. The presence of these gaps along with the support of 6 out of the 8 FGD participants recommends the need for a separate regulatory pharmacy course. Recommendations on the course content and its implementation were also discussed in this study.

Key words: regulatory pharmacy, gap analysis, needs assessment, pharmacy education, philippine pharmacy curriculum

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