

CAPSIL

CAPSI Awareness Week

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The Future of Pharmacy: You Decide

The profession of pharmacy is changing. What used to be defined by terms such as "lick, stick, count, and pour" is now described using buzzwords such as "disease management" and "pharmaceutical care". This change is being driven partly by want and partly by necessity. Pharmacists, especially new practitioners, and student pharmacists don't want to lick, stick, count, or pour anymore. They want to put into practice that which they have learned while in school. Pharmacists graduating today not only have the ability to evaluate the appropriateness of drug therapy, monitor treatment progress, conduct consultations and have an overall positive effect on patient health care, but want to. Rather than waiting for a mandated change to the profession of pharmacy, individual pharmacists are taking it upon themselves and striving to practice pharmacy to its full potential. These innovative pharmacists are driving change in the profession of pharmacy from within.

This shift in practice is being aided by the necessity of it. Not only do pharmacists no longer want to lick, stick, count, or pour, but we are no longer needed to perform these tasks. The reality is that machines are capable of performing these tasks more quickly, and maybe even more accurately, than an individual. Many pharmacies today have computer software that alerts the pharmacist to potential drug interactions with other medications or disease states. Although automation may not be prevalent in pharmacy yet, it will be. And while this automation may aid the pharmacist by freeing up time to counsel patients, perform consultations, and effect positive change in patient health care, it also threatens pharmacy as it has been practiced in the past. The old role of the pharmacist will be phased out. The profession of pharmacy must either choose to leave it behind, or be left behind.

Whether due to the fact that the pharmacist of today wants more in their practice environment, or that pharmacy will not survive if we continue to practice it the way it has been, the profession is ripe for change. As student pharmacists, we have the most at stake in the path this change takes because, come tomorrow, we will be the ones practicing. We also have a great opportunity. The profession is undergoing change. If we become involved in this change and take an active, vocal role in this change, we can help direct this change with the hope that the future of pharmacy will resemble our idealistic view of it. What do you want the future of pharmacy to be? Decide, get involved, and make it happen!

Trevor Kidney
CAPSI President 2002-2003