

Pharmacy Technician

Students Name

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## Pharmacy Technician

### **Job Description**

Pharmacy technicians are among the professionals in a health care facility. The work of a pharmacy technician requires various skills that ensure proper patient management. They play a crucial role in a faster service delivery. A pharmacist needs the services of a pharmacy technician to ensure customers are served diligently.

### Scope of practice

Pharmacy technicians need to understand the scope of their practice to ensure they don't overstep their mandates. There is a distinct boundary demarcating the limits within which their practice lies. There are restrictions for pharmacy technician practice. The technicians are not allowed to dispense medicine without a pharmacist's approval; they are also not trained or permitted to inform clients concerning medications or their uses; they are not supposed to answer questions from clients regarding patient assessment, dosage forms or modes of drug administration and side effects of the drugs. Pharmacy technicians, however, play crucial roles in service delivery and patient management.

### Duties

A pharmacy technician is required to perform several activities within their professional practice. Apart from the routine filling of prescriptions, stocking and the distribution of medication, pharmacy technicians help pharmacists in other duties depending on their qualifications and skills. Pharmacy technicians perform various arithmetic calculations that are useful for the proper determination of doses and also in the efficient preparation of solutions. They are also valuable in performing techniques such as the aseptic, packaging and preparation of medications. During dispensing of medication, they should have basic information on the side

effects and uses of medication for well-known diseases which are prescribed and non-prescribed. Occasionally, they offer counsel for the patient when necessary. Their another duty is filling and labeling of prescriptions.

A key goal of a pharmacy or pharmacy technician is to maintain efficiency and accuracy in service delivery. To avoid potentially lethal consequences of dispensing the wrong medication, proper attention should be observed. Some of these precautions include asking questions whenever in doubt, use of properly labeled dispensing bottles or containers or shelves, counter checking received prescriptions, double checking of dispensed drugs and proper measurement and packaging of medications (National Learning Corporation, 2014). All these processes are prone to errors and hence carefully checked (CareerOneStop, 2015). Most drugs have adverse side effects if not dispensed in their correct dosage, form and administration routes. As a quality assurance strategy, a pharmacy technician can do inventory checks, shelf stocking, and review the manifest for any error and identify potentially expired medication, labeling supplies and careful disposal of patient data along with ensuring sanitation.

#### Code of conduct

Code of conduct is among the main pillars of any profession. Such principles help promote confidence and trust in a profession. Pharmacy technicians must have a standard code of conduct to maintain good professional relationship not only with patients but with other staff members too. The code of conduct is also important in developing skills and knowledge for the benefit of the profession. Some of the seven basic codes of conduct or principles for both pharmacists and pharmacy technicians are given below. First, is showing respect for others. Another is being honest and trustworthy. The third one is making customer care a priority. A fundamental principle is also Development of personal skills, knowledge, and competence.

Taking responsibility for your work practice is also very important. Others include involving patients in matters of their own health and finally practice of professional judgment in the interest of the patient and public at large (Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain, 2007).

### Education

Based on their involvement in crucial patient care management, pharmacy technicians should be occupationally skilled and well trained. In the United States, these skills are acquired in many ways, but in a rapidly growing healthcare industry, a growing number choose to acquire a formal education for better job prospects (National Learning Corporation, 2014). The need for this program was due to increasing demand for more staffs to assist the pharmacist in service delivery (Kaufman et al., 1975). There are many courses in various fields. The level of training and mode of training depend on the subject profession. For example, those who work at a retail store are likely to receive training while working (Neumiller & Hopper, 2016). There are many institutions offering a certificate in pharmacy and technology. Passing the “Pharmacy Technician Certification Board” (PTCB) certification exam makes one certified and titled as ‘CPhT.’ Two of such institutions are Miami Dade College and Southeastern College.

At Miami Dade College, the training involves a vocational credit certificate program, a 2-3 semester course work. It also includes 35 vocational credits equivalent to 1050 contract hours. At Southeaster College, it involves completion of 39.0 credit hours (a total of 1224 hours) and is offered in 10 months for full-time students or in 18 months for part-time students. The approximate charge at Southeastern College is between \$3,300 and \$3,700 while at Miami Dade the estimated cost is an approximately \$96.08 per credit for in-state students and \$355.31 for foreigners per credit. There are different training regimes. May and Webster note that other training regimens have come up including the Mail Order Training Programs and that the main

difference is that this business does not involve physical customer interactions (May & Webster 2014). Therefore, the pharmacy technician is taught how to deal with clients and how to perform other duties.

### **Employment**

Every student or a professional expects to get a good paying job. Factors such as qualifications and choice of work environment may determine a pharmacy technician's duties. Many choose to work in retail pharmacies, community pharmacy, present in many stores such as Walgreens, CVS or other convenience stores and they are required to have excellent people skills due to the high pressure from busy shifts (Moini, 2016). Most CPhTs prefer working in hospitals. The benefits include a closer approach towards the medication preparations, often in asepsis, and dispensing. Financially, hospitals provide better pay packages and better workplace benefit. However, in all these roles, they work under a licensed pharmacist and should perform pharmacy compounding as prescribed. Other than hospitals, nursing care facilities, private and chain drugstores, health maintenance organs, wholesale and drug retail houses. Some research institutions, and pharmaceuticals also provide job opportunities for pharmacy technicians.

### **Professional Activities**

Just like other professionals, pharmacy technicians have administrative bodies that keep fight for their welfare. Some of these bodies include the National Pharmacy Technicians Association. Its membership includes both students and practicing pharm. techs. The membership fee for students is about \$15. The bodies also help enhance professionalism and ensure activities they partake do not interfere with the delivery of services. The type of clothing recommended can be either scrubs or a casual business attire. Due to spending time walking and standing, dress shoes and a form of low heels shoes are recommended for male and female

technicians respectively, and jewelry is prohibited, exceptions being wedding bands and wristwatches (Brunton, 2015).

On sterility and hygienic issues in the facility, pharmacy technicians should maintain short and well-kept hair, including beards for men. Also, artificial, long and dirty nails are strongly discouraged, mainly due to the occurrence of a pharmacy technician to perform an IV without any warning (Brunton, 2015). Some of the professional activities offered by welfare bodies include further training in ethics for pharmacy technicians, further specialized training due to expanding roles including pediatrician medication adherence. Further training in specialized cases like oncology, nuclear medicine, and pharmacy automation require further education along with management education for supervisory roles (Karesztes, J. M. 2006).

In summary, in regards to the attitude, pharmacy technicians should exhibit positive and outright useful ways of thinking which must be clearly expressed in their behavior such as proper time management (Brunton, 2015). Appropriate training and experience for pharmacy technicians are necessary due to their expanding roles including supervisory responsibilities.

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