

Chapter 9

Relationships Between Academia and Professionals: The Contribution of the Portuguese Education and Practice Platform

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ABSTRACT

Professional practice is regulated by associations with regulatory powers, namely the Portuguese Pharmaceutical Society (PPS). Education is regulated by the Ministry of Education, responsible for ensuring access to quality of education for all citizens across all professional spectra. Aiming to contribute to an improved continuity between education and the career pathway, from early phases to eventual specialization, the PPS, who represents the interests of all registered pharmacists, developed a new structure entitled the Education and Practice Platform (EPP). This structure includes one representative from each institution providing education in pharmaceutical sciences and all Councils of Specialty Boards of Practice. This chapter provides an overview of pharmacy education in Portugal, present the authors' view of strengths and limitation of the current educational system, and details the development of the EPP, presenting achievements to date, future plans, and expectations on the EPP's contribution on aligning education with societal needs.

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INTRODUCTION

Society has been changing its disease patterns, most markedly over the last century. In industrialized countries and progressing globally, non-communicable diseases play a growing role, leading to different care needs. Citizens and consumers are also becoming constantly more demanding, again impacting on care provision. All these factors call for responsive systems of education that can prepare pharmacists for the new demands of the profession.

This chapter will start by providing a historical perspective on pharmacy education in Portugal; presenting the current challenges that academia faces to answer societal requests and demands from the employers in the pharmaceutical sector. We will then describe the development of an initiative developed within the Pharmaceutical Society, which aims to contribute to better alignment between education and practice. We shall present our views on the way this platform may contribute in the present and possibly in the future to motivate stakeholders involved to find common interests and share possible joint solutions for more competent pharmacists to better meet the current societal needs.

The main objectives of this text are therefore to provide an overview of pharmacy education in Portugal, comment on the changes in the pharmaceutical workforce to meet societal needs; while highlighting some identified gaps in education and practice, and finally concluding on how a structure like the education and practice platform may contribute to further align workforce demands with the academic offer.

The specific objectives are to:

- Describe current pharmacy education globally and in Portugal.
- Highlight opportunities for improvements in education.
- Describe the current pharmaceutical workforce, demands, and needs globally and in Portugal.
- Highlight opportunities for improvement in practice.
- Define the common interests of academia and pharmacy professionals.
- Describe the developments within the Platform Education and Practice as a contribution to some of these factors.

BACKGROUND

Historical Perspective on Pharmacy Education in Portugal

Pharmacy education in Portugal dates to the XVI century, in the University of Coimbra. There were specific courses for the so-called “apothecaries”. However,

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