

Chapter 12

Applying Communication Ethics to Pharmacy Students' Education

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ABSTRACT

This chapter addresses the problem of applying communication ethics to pharmacy students' education. The purpose of the chapter is to stimulate reflection about the importance of teaching and integrating communication ethics in their curricula in order to make pharmacists capable of professional counselling to the patients by pharmaceutical care. Existing literature refers mainly of the effectiveness of teaching ethics in medical education, engineering, accounting, psychology, and business. There is little evidence about using this concept in the pharmacist's activity and their communication with the patients. Consequently, this chapter tries to provide an overview of how communication ethics can be integrated in the educational curricula for pharmacy students. It is the responsibility of the higher education institutions to offer to pharmacy students a modern, adequate, and upgraded curricula program to increase the communication skills of the future pharmacists.

INTRODUCTION

This chapter aims to explore the main aspects of an approach of theoretical substantiation and motivation for implementing some programs of Communication Ethics in Pharmacy High Education. The perspective addressed in this chapter is based on the arguments offered by the international experiences in this field and the personal experience in pharmaceutical academic education of the authors.

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Applying Communication Ethics to Pharmacy Students' Education

The chapter is conceived as a plea to meet the needs of future specialists in pharmacy (students) for training and education in the field of Communication Ethics as a basis for practicing the profession. In this perspective, the general purpose of the chapter is to summarize the available literature approaches in this field to configure them as a motivation for introducing Communication Ethics in Pharmacy students' curricula.

At present, the training programs of Romanian pharmacy students include some communication courses that offer tools for communication with the patient, but these do not involve communication ethics. The authors consider that training and development of communication skills must be based on the general principles of Communication Ethics. Therefore, there is a need to deepen the knowledge of this field and more actively promote it among medical specialists.

Existing literature refers mainly to the effectiveness of teaching ethics in medical education, engineering, accounting, psychology, and business (Ballard *et al.*, 2014). There is little evidence about using this concept in the pharmacist's activity and communication with the patients. Consequently, this chapter tries to provide an overview of how Communication Ethics can be integrated into the educational curricula for Pharmacy students.

The authors hope that through the information presented in this chapter to contribute to the awareness of the future pharmacist's profession, where the pharmacist has an identity more anchored in nowadays medical reality, being the responsible manager of drug therapy of the patients, as the International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP) and World Health Organization (WHO) stipulate. In order to meet the patients' needs for a better medical care, and an increased quality of life, the pharmacists have to improve their communication skills, while taken into consideration the ethical aspects. Thus, while offer pharmaceutical services, they have to manage multiple ethical dilemma that are more increasing during these uncertain times of COVID-19 pandemic. A framework of ethical communication is nowadays more necessary than ever.

The purpose of the chapter is to stimulate reflection about the importance of teaching and integrating Communication Ethics in the general curricula for Pharmacy students to make them capable of professional counseling to the patients by Pharmaceutical Care.

Subsumed for this purpose are the following specific objectives:

1. The description of the current knowledge of the pedagogical perspectives which imposed the Communication Ethics as an academic field, together with a short history of implementation of Communication Ethics Curricula in the higher education ;
2. The analysis of the ethical aspects of communication in the pharmacist profession;
3. The reasoning of the need of the Integration of Communication Ethics in the concept of Pharmaceutical care, as well as highlighting the necessity of the Pharmacy students for communication ethics in their future activity;
4. The examination of the challenges of the communication with the patients from the pharmaceutical care point of view and changes in Communication Ethics during the COVID-19 pandemic, and also possible suggestions regarding the pharmacists' academic training courses.

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