

Pharmacists

PROFESSIONAL CODE OF CONDUCT

The Code of Conduct prescribes the ethical responsibilities expected of all licensed pharmacists and pharmacy assistants in the UAE.

The Code defines the ethical responsibility inherent in the pharmacist's role and supports the need to protect and promote the interests of patients in accordance with Muslim values and health care ethics as well as the rich cultural heritage and blend of the UAE community. Pharmacists foster a caring relationship with society based on sound ethical values and this relationship focuses on promoting health, preventing illness, restoring health and alleviating suffering.

This Code intends to:

- Guide and strengthen pharmacist's ethical behavior in practice,
- Provide ethical standards to facilitate pharmacists individual and collective reflection and describe expected pharmacist action,
- Outline the ethical behavior society can generally expect from pharmacists and the pharmacy profession.

This Code is not exhaustive. It is based on three core ethical principles namely, competence, respect and integrity.

The day to day behavior of the pharmacist should demonstrate the following:

1. COMPETENCE

A competent pharmacist provides the best pharmaceutical care possible in a scientific and compassionate way.

1.1. This requires the pharmacist to have the necessary skills for the job.

The Pharmacist:

- 1.1.1. Maintains and improves his / her professional competence through lifelong learning.

- 1.1.2. Is able to communicate with the patients or their career.
- 1.1.3. Acts as the patients' advocate through his/her active participation in multidisciplinary teams.
- 1.1.4. Makes his/her duty to review, maintain and improve his/her knowledge and abilities as new medications and other health technologies become available.
- 1.1.5. Ensures that he/she receives adequate in-service training for any service he/she is asked to perform.
- 1.1.6. Has membership of a nationally and/or internationally recognized pharmaceutical organization.
- 1.1.7. Has knowledge of first-aid, especially if he/she works in hospitals and health centers.
- 1.1.8. Takes responsibility for the competency of the staff who he/she directly supervises.

1. RESPECT

A pharmacist's prime concern is the good of every patient and other members of the community

Respect includes, but is not limited to:

1.1. Respect for the patient's culture, race, class, gender

The Pharmacist:

- 1.1.1. Respects the cultural needs and unique lifestyle of patients.
- 1.1.2. Ensures that a competent interpreter is available, when he/she does not have the necessary competence in the language of the patient.
- 1.1.3. Is always ready to advocate for the basic rights of a patient

1.2. Respect for the patients' right to receive safe medicine

The Pharmacist:

- 1.2.1. Takes all measures to protect the patient from undue risks of adverse drug reaction.
- 1.2.2. Does not supply a medicine if there is doubt as to its quality, safety or effectiveness.
- 1.2.3. In the presence of any uncertainty about the interpretation of a prescription, he/she makes every effort to contact the prescriber for clarification.

1.3. Respect for fellow professionals and the profession of Pharmacy

The pharmacist:

- 1.3.1. Is to do nothing to undermine the patient's confidence in the prescriber.
- 1.3.2. Adheres to the laws and regulations applicable to the ethical practice of pharmacy in the UAE, at all times.
- 1.3.3. Takes responsibility for his/her own professional activities and for all activities performed under his/her direct supervision.

1.4. Respect for the environment

The Pharmacist:

- 1.4.1. Takes all reasonable care when disposing of unwanted medicines and chemicals and other materials.

2. INTEGRITY

The pharmacist is seen to be honest and fair in all his/her dealings. He/She is not to take advantage of his/her privileged position for personal gain.

Integrity includes, but is not limited to:

2.1. Maintaining The Confidentiality Of The Medical Record

The Pharmacist:

- 2.1.1. Upholds the confidentiality of any information acquired in the course of professional practice relating to patients and their families.
- 2.1.2. Discloses any information regarding the patients only with informed consent or as required by a court of law or when the wider public interest justifies disclosure.
- 2.1.3. Takes all reasonable steps to ensure that confidential information in his/her direct control remain restricted. Confidential data extends beyond the medical details and includes address, telephone, and any family or

financial data contained in the medical record and hospital registration details.

- 2.1.4. Takes all measures to protect patients' confidentiality when patient data is presented for teaching purposes.

2.2. Carrying Out All Responsibilities And Duties In A Fair And Honest Manner

The Pharmacist:

- 2.2.1. Acts with honesty and integrity at all times and should not do anything that brings the MOH or his/her professional organization into disrepute.
- 2.2.2. Lives according to reasonably expected standards of behavior both within and outside of his/her professional practice.
- 2.2.3. Keeps himself/herself up to date with any changes in the laws and regulations that affect his/her area of practice and seeks guidance from the MOH for clarification.
- 2.2.4. Encourages transparency in all financial and contractual matters.

2.3. Not Taking Advantage Of Their Privileged Position

The Pharmacist:

- 2.3.1. Does not allow his/her professional judgment to be based on personal benefit consideration.
- 2.3.2. Does not promote or supply specific medicines or devices in response to financial benefit, gifts or hospitality.
- 2.3.3. Abstains from making decisions and refers the matter to higher authorities, when he/she faces a clear or potential conflict of interest.

2.4. Working according to the official policy and procedures of the MOH

The Pharmacist:

- 2.4.1. Needs to have clear, written standards for the level of service provided in his/her work place.
- 2.4.2. Dispenses only prescriptions that are written and valid according to current regulations.

- 2.4.3. Is responsible for ensuring that the quality and quantity of medicine he/she supplies is adequate and not excessive, especially for medicines with potential for abuse, dependence or waste due to short shelf-life.
- 2.4.4. Does not change the quality or quantity of the prescription without agreement from the doctor or other official directive.
- 2.4.5. Does not dispense free, or promotional samples or expired medicines, including medicine that would expire within the intended period of use.
- 2.4.6. Reports to the senior manager inability to comply with the written standards due to limitations in working conditions.
- 2.4.7. Responds to emergency requests and cooperates fully with arrangements that ensure 24-hour access to a pharmacist.

2.5. Professional independence

The Pharmacist:

- 2.5.1. Avoids any situation which will present a conflict of interest that compromises his/her professional judgment.
- 2.5.2. Refrains from practicing under conditions that compromise his/her professional independence, judgment or integrity, nor imposes such conditions on others.
- 2.5.3. Has the right to refuse unauthorized requests for medicines.
- 2.5.4. Contacts the prescriber of any medicine to ensure that the prescription is safe.
- 2.5.5. Encourages and expects a good level of professional cooperation from doctors, nurses and allied health care technicians.

Bibliography

Australia

Pharmaceutical Society of Australia 1999
Code of Professional Conduct

Canada

National Association of Pharmacy Regulatory Authorities (NAPRA)(1998)
Model Standards of Practice for Canadian Pharmacists

United Arab Emirates

Ministry of Health (MOH) (1999)
Professional Code of Conduct

United Kingdom

Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain (RPSGB) 2000
Code of Ethics and Professional Standards in Medicines, Ethics and Practice: A Guide for Pharmacists 23rd Edition
ISBN: 0 85369 458 3

USA

American Pharmacy Association (1994)
Code of Ethics for Pharmacists