

For personal use only. Not to be reproduced without permission of the publisher (copyright@ppme.eu).

The position of hospital pharmacy in Ireland



Ms Marita Kinsella

A shortened form of an interview with the Chief Pharmacist of the Department of Health and Children, Ms Marita Kinsella.

EJHP: Do you support hospital pharmacy as a specialised field?

Ms Kinsella: The education, training and continuing professional development of pharmacists is one of the most important areas covered by the Pharmacy Act 2007. The Act sets out in very broad terms a framework for the delivery of pharmacy education and training and allows for specific education, training and professional development requirements to be set down in secondary legislation. One of the new provisions refers to the acquisition of specialisations in pharmacy, demonstrates the Legislature's recognition of the development of specialisations in pharmacy, including hospital pharmacy and leaves the door open for the development of specialisations into the future.

EJHP: What incentives does or should Ireland have to encourage pharmaceutical students to enter hospital pharmacy?

Ms Kinsella: In order to keep abreast of developments in pharmacy education and training throughout the European Union and internationally, the current 5-year pharmacy education and training programme is being reviewed as part of the Pharmacy Education and Accreditation Reviews (PEARs) Project. This project is a comprehensive review of the current 5-year programme of pharmacy education and training in Ireland and particularly a

review of pharmacy in-service training. It is expected that this project will propose new models for pharmacy education and training delivery in Ireland and consider new ways to encourage and support hospital pharmacies as training locations.

EJHP: Do you think educational resources for pharmacists who wish to specialise in hospital pharmacy are adequate in your country?

Ms Kinsella: There are, at present, a number of very high quality postgraduate programmes that specialise in hospital pharmacy. These courses have been supported by the chief hospital pharmacists and hospital administrations and this has promoted increasing numbers of hospital pharmacists to undertake these specialist qualifications. As hospital pharmacy continues to develop as a discipline there will continue to be a need for developments in hospital pharmacy postgraduate qualifications.

EJHP: Do you think the number of hospital pharmacists in your country is adequate?

Ms Kinsella: As with health systems throughout the world in these times of financial crisis, it is difficult to increase the numbers of health professionals including hospital pharmacists. An important way that the scope and range of services provided by hospital pharmacists for the benefit of patients can be expanded and developed is through making the best use of resources, breaking down barriers between traditional professional roles and work practices, and using the skills of hospital pharmacists to utmost effect. In addition it is important that hospital pharmacists continue to

successfully use an evidence-based approach in growing their role and scope of practice in Ireland.

EJHP: What do you see as the critical issues of drug provision in hospitals? How can hospital pharmacists improve overall drug provision?

Ms Kinsella: Hospital pharmacists have an important role to play in medicine procurement and cost management within the hospital sector as a whole to ensure that cost-effective and appropriate medicinal therapy is available for the care and treatment of patients. Cost-effectiveness, equity of access, issues related to centralised purchasing and efficient systems for the management of dispensing, administration and distribution of medicines within hospitals will continue to be critical issues in medicines provision in Ireland.

Inextricably linked with drug provision is the safe, effective and rational use of medicines. Hospital pharmacists can play a key role in initiatives on medication safety and promoting evidence-based practice to inform policy especially medicines policy, as part of the implementation of the August 2008 Report of the Commission on Patient Safety. Medication reconciliation on patient entry to and exit from hospital has the potential to improve seamless care, reduce the opportunity for medication error and reduce wastage. Hospital pharmacists are ideally placed to work in a multi-disciplinary way with health professionals within the hospital, the community and other care settings and can contribute to improving the rational and safe use of medicines.