

Ireland

Pharmacist education

The Pharmacy Regulator decided to change the structure of the final year of pharmacist training. The structure has altered to a modular format to align the content with the requirements of the Bologna agreement. After the four-year undergraduate course, an internship year of on-the-job training is required. An MPharm is awarded at the end of the course. The contract for this internship year was awarded to the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI), for three years following a competitive tender. The RCSI will be providing the material and e-learning resources for the internship year as well as eight study days on site plus all the final competency exams.

Hospital pharmacy

The Hospital Pharmacists Association, Ireland (HPAI), has set up a network of link or champion pharmacists in each hospital. The role of the champion pharmacist is to liaise between individual hospital pharmacy departments and the Executive Board of HPAI. Issues will include promoting the role of HPAI in contributing to Ireland's response to the International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP) global standards on hospital pharmacy. The first meeting was held on 1 October 2009 with 30 pharmacists present. The 'fitness to practice' section of the Pharmacy Act came into force in August 2009. This means that continuing education becomes mandatory and the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland has set up disciplinary processes to support its role as Regulator. These developments are set against a background of economic turmoil, as the government has significantly reduced levels of reimbursement for prescribed medicines. In December 2009, it also reduced the salary for all public servants, including hospital pharmacists, by 5%.

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Finland

Fimea, Finnish Medicines Agency starts working

The administration of the pharmaceutical service is being reorganised under the new Finnish Medicines Agency (Fimea). It replaces two former bodies, the National Agency for Medicines (NAM) and the Centre for Pharmacotherapy Development (ROHTO).

Fimea started its operations on 1 November 2009. Its main duties include authorisation and supervision tasks in the pharmaceuticals sector, research and development, and production and dissemination of information on medicinal products with a view to improving the effectiveness of pharmaceutical service and pharmacotherapy.

The biggest challenges in the pharmaceutical sector include an ageing population, the increasing use of medicines, ever more complex medicinal treatment and growing cost pressure. The aim of concentrating the pharmaceutical duties in the new agency, as well as its new tasks, is to improve the pharmaceutical service for the population and the safety, appropriateness and economy of pharmacotherapy. The reform will contribute to integrating the skills and knowledge related to medicinal products. In addition, the population can be provided impartial information on medicinal products. As part of the reorganisation, the work of regulating and inspecting medical devices has been transferred to the National Supervisory Authority for Welfare and Health (Valvira). The ROHTO workshops for the development of primary health care have been transferred to the National Institute for Health and Welfare (THL).
www.fimea.fi

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Lithuania

Hospital pharmacy: students' opinions

Students at the University of Medicine in Kaunas, Lithuania's only pharmacy faculty, are showing more interest in hospital work. They suggest having clinical disciplines like pharmacotherapy or clinical pharmacy earlier in their studies to enable them to form job perspectives at an earlier stage. The integration of clinical subjects into existing courses, being considered at present, may remarkably improve the situation of hospital pharmacy in the future.

Many students think that a hospital pharmacist should be the drug specialist and have really good clinical knowledge. Hospital pharmacists should work together with doctors on medicines prescription and compatibility. They should consult the patients about rational pharmacotherapy. Hospital pharmacists should be responsible for all medicines supplied and distributed in the hospital - and be one of the most important people in the treating process.

In the students' opinion, the most important disciplines to a hospital pharmacist are theoretical and clinical pharmacy, pharmacotherapy, internal diseases, pathological physiology and biochemistry. Hospital pharmacists should have a good knowledge of haemodynamic indexes, be able to understand clinical conditions and test results, relating them with pharmacotherapy.

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