

Interprofessional Continuous Professional Development in Qatar

Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC) is the main governmental healthcare entity overseeing twelve hospitals which serve different specialties and geographical areas across the state of Qatar. It is ranked the 13th best healthcare system in the world by the 2017 Legatum Prosperity Index, with a large workforce of pharmacists and clinical specialists. In addition to being accredited by The Joint Commission and the American Council of Graduate Medical Education, HMC is also accredited by reputable organizations such as the American Council of Pharmacy Education (ACPE) and the Qatar Council for Healthcare Practitioners (QCHP).

At HMC, the pharmacy executive office oversees its Continuous Pharmacy Professional Development (CPPD) office. The CPPD office leads the professional development for pharmacists across Qatar. This article describes strategies CPPD has taken to enhance professional development, establish an interprofessional learning environment and promote pharmacy excellence.

Previously, Qatar did not require CE points to maintain pharmacy license. Prior to implementation, Continuous Professional Development (CPD) was not well established in Qatar. It was reported that pharmacists require continuous education but are unable to attend CE events. A survey of all pharmacists in Qatar stated that 25% of pharmacists did not attend any live CE activities for two years.¹ Pharmacists also did not engage in any sort of collaborative practice agreements. In early 2016, Qatar Council of Healthcare Practitioners (QCHP) implemented new accreditation standards and the ministry of health passed a law that pharmacists must complete at least 80 CE points every two years to maintain their license.

Hence, the CPPD office was initiated at HMC in 2016, and obtained full accreditation status later that year. The team implemented a standard CPD process to comply with both QCHP and ACPE standards.

The purpose of the CPD Committee of HMC is to provide a coordinated program



Stars of Excellence Award Ceremony, 2018. In this picture, left to right: (front row) Kawther Tawengi, BSc (Pharm), PharmD, CPPD Officer Heart Hospital; Sara Mahmoud, PharmD, BCCCP, CPPD Office Coordinator; Dr. Moza Al Hail, Executive Director of Pharmacy Hamad Medical Corporation, Visiting Professor at Robert Gordon University; Rasha Al Anany, BSc (Pharm), PharmD, Head of CPPD Office; Dania Alkhiyami, BSc (Pharm), PharmD, BCPS, CPPD Office Coordinator; (back row) Arwa Abujalala, BSc (Pharm), CPHQ, CPPS, PMP, CPPD Officer Rumaila Hospital; Palli Abdelrouf, BSc (Pharm), MSc(Clinical), PhD, Co-Head of CPPD Office; Wessam Al Kassem, PharmD, MScPharm, MBA, Assistant Director of Pharmacy Services; Binny Thomas, BPharm, MPharm, PgCert(Res), SIDP, PhD, QIPC Scientific& Research review committee.

of evidence-based pharmacy educational activities for pharmacy and healthcare staff to enhance their ability to provide excellent patient care, health maintenance, improved patient outcomes and community health. The office has two strategic goals which are: being a world-class education provider and reporting greater confidence in learners' ability to apply knowledge.

The CPPD is composed of a core corporate team and office representatives or teams in each facility. The office is responsible for reviewing accreditation standards, measuring educational needs assessment for pharmacists and other healthcare practitioners, and developing general and specialized educational activities, including certificate programs, with a main focus on pharmacists. CPD officers conduct specialized needs assessment for their

staff and develop educational activities for their facility. Since 2016, the CPPD office accomplished a lot of great achievements and implemented interprofessional education, which led to the collaborative pharmacy practice national project. Here is what we learned so far about interprofessional education.

1. Measure Educational Needs

The CPPD office adopted several methods to measure the educational needs of pharmacists and other healthcare practitioners. The tools utilized were surveys, departmental meetings, medication errors analysis, a record of frequently asked questions (by physicians, pharmacists and nurses) in a corporate drug information center, in-depth interview questions, nominal group technique and expert opinions from pharmacy specialists about

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what is required to enhance pharmacists' knowledge and skills to provide optimum patient care. Some of these results have been previously published and presented in international conferences.

A good example of tailored CPD is the Qatar International Pharmacy Conference (QIPC) which targets all healthcare practitioners and is composed of educational workshops for different specialties. The scientific committee of the 5th QIPC committee was composed of: pharmacists and specialists from each HMC hospital, community pharmacy, Qatar University, physicians and nurses. The committee conducted comprehensive needs assessment through: assessment surveys, focus groups in each hospital and in-depth one-on-one interviews with clinical pharmacy specialists. The needs assessment resulted in an interprofessional educational activity which included workshops such as psychiatric emergencies pharmacotherapy, pharmacokinetics of ECMO, and a panel discussion about implementing antimicrobial stewardship. Lectures addressed topics such as: treatment of pain and sedation in pediatrics, stem cell transplant and Qatar genome project. Faculty members of this event included pharmacists and physicians and the event was attended by a variety of healthcare professionals and specialists.

2. Hold Specialized Conferences and Symposia

The CPPD office organizes and holds a number of specialized educational activities which are attended by pharmacists, physicians and nurses. Some examples to mention include the Hematology Oncology Pharmacy Education (HOPE) Day which is held annually at the National Center for Cancer and Research Hospital (NCCCR). In 2019, this event hosted several international and local experts from multiple professions who addressed myeloid malignancy updates.

3. Target Collaborative Practice Professionals

Another example of interprofessional CPD designed specifically for those in practice is the anticoagulation management symposium. The target audience in this event was clinical pharmacy specialists and cardiologists.

Those pharmacists have run their own clinics and prescribe collaboratively with department of cardiology. The scientific committee and faculty were anticoagulation clinic pharmacy specialists, cardiologists, neurologists and internal medicine physicians. The event covered advanced and emerging topics such as anticoagulation in pregnancy, anti-phospholipid syndrome, neurology and venous thromboembolism.

4. Hold Education Days

The CPPD team representative in each hospital carries out their individual education days which can be multidisciplinary and interprofessional. Our best example is the series of diabetes days held at Hamad General Hospital. Faculty at this event included physicians, pharmacists, diabetic educators and nurses. The event is attended by an interprofessional audience who are required to work in interprofessional groups to enhance collaborative practice.

Pharmacists from across HMC serve as faculty and scientific committee members for accredited activities managed by other departments as well. In several hospitals such as the Women Wellness and Research Center and Mental Health Hospital, pharmacists participate in providing lectures for physicians and nurses. They are also heavily involved in major conferences such as the annual Mental Health Conference and Qatar's Critical Care Conference.

5. The Future is All About Simulation

Hamad Medical Corporation launched a simulation center to hold interprofessional simulation courses. The pharmacy department was among the first to approach the center and already implemented several room settings for pharmacy-led simulation courses. In order to address the need to understand simulation, we invited experts who provided workshops on tools to establish successful interprofessional education and simulation courses.

IMPACT OF CPPD

Better confidence and proficiency

So far, the CPPD office has provided more than 900 educational activities for over 12,000 attendees with more than 500 QCHP accredited and over 100 ACPE accredited activities. A satisfaction survey showed that most pharmacy

professionals agreed that CPPD has positively impacted their knowledge (81%), increased their confidence and performance in daily practice (75%) and encouraged them to pursue further learning opportunities. Eighty percent of pharmacists agreed that CPD has positively impacted their daily performance.

Learn and Apply

The CPPD office now leads a national project which aims to empower pharmacists towards interprofessional practice and collaborative care. The smart pharmacy project is part of a global initiative implemented in 16 other countries. This initiative targets diabetes management, which is a current national priority. The office provided training to selected pharmacists from different facilities and community pharmacies across the state of Qatar. The team signed collaborative agreements and empowered pharmacists to provide direct patient care. This resulted in advanced counseling, continuity of care, referrals, therapy changes and identification of many drug related problems.

The office was awarded the national Stars Of Excellence Award by the Minister of Health in 2018 for being an exemplary professional development model in the Middle East.

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Reference

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