

CONFERENCE COMPETENCE DEVELOPMENT OF PHARMACISTS

Subotica Pharmacy, March 2012.

New role of pharmacists in the health care of citizens defined as a pharmaceutical health care, requires pharmacists to upgrade already existing knowledge gained from higher education and continuous improvement of pharmaceutical skills. In the last few years is observed special interest of the International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP) for effective programs for the evaluation and development of competence in pharmacy. General Level Framework (GLF) was developed by a group of academic experts CoDEG (Competency Development and Evaluation Group) from the UK, proved to be an effective tool for development and evaluation of professional competence in pharmacy. GLF document has so far been implemented on several continents in Europe, including Great Britain and Croatia, this program has found its application in Serbia, at the *Subotica Pharmacy*.

Motivated by the results of this project, *Subotica Pharmacy*, in cooperation with representatives of the CoDEG and professional institutions and organizations, had successfully organized the symposium, which aims at the presentation of past experiences, attitudes and trends of development of professional competence of pharmacists. Conference was attended by about 120 participants, pharmacists from across the country, and guests from Croatia, Macedonia and Hungary.

On 09 March 2012 an expert panel session was held about the new competence document, *Global Competency Framework (GbCF)*, which should be adopted this year by FIP. Members of the expert group were: professors from Faculty of Pharmacy - University of Belgrade, members of Pharmaceutical Chamber of Serbia, CoDEG group, City Hospital of Subotica, Health Center of Subotica, Novi Sad Pharmacy, Sremska Mitrovica Pharmacy and *Subotica Pharmacy*. According to this model, the professional scientific competencies are divided into three basic groups: expert competencies, organization and management competencies, and personal competencies.

Conference *Competence development of pharmacists* was held on 10 March 2012, and it was open for the public. Special contribution was given by eminent experts from abroad.

Dr sc. **Dusanka Krajnovic** (Faculty of Pharmacy, University of Belgrade) gave a lecture about postgraduate curricula, which are innovated and perfected, while the courses for continual education are created according to practical local needs.

Professor Ian Bates (Director, FIP-WHO-UNESCO Global Pharmacy Education Taskforce) held a presentation about potential value of experiential learning as applied to a needs-based education model (education fit for local needs). He put into focus the importance of Continuing Professional Development (CPD). This recognized expert and lecturer (Head of Educational Development, School of Pharmacy, University of London) introduced the participants with the global trends and policies in education and professional development of pharmacy practice.

Director of *Subotica Pharmacy*, MSc **Svetlana Stojkov Rudinski** presented experiences of *Subotica Pharmacy*. In March and October 2011 Subotica Pharmacy conducted an assessment of pharmacist competencies of 32 pharmacists, with the help of the GLF. The level of pharmacist competence was evaluated based on the methodology used in other countries which have also adopted the GLF. In order to improve the overall results and with the emphasis on those areas which scored poorly, several activities and training sessions were arranged on the premises between the two assessment periods.

The results of the second appraisal showed improvement in all competencies, as was the case with other countries which use the GLF in the assessment and self-assessment of pharmacist competencies.

By implementing the GLF, *Subotica Pharmacy* has become a pioneer in leading the way towards the model of a globally applicable evaluation instrument and the development of pharmacist competencies.

Through lecture of **Dr Arijana Mestrovic, MPharm** (CoDEG Eastern and Central Europe representative) we got more familiar with the content of the document *Global Competency Framework* (GbCF), and also with previous experience in the application of GLF document in pharmacies in Croatia.

Pharmaceutical health care is a professional activity in which the pharmacists are responsible for the positive outcome of drug therapy (Hepler and Strand, 1989.). Today, many countries seek to integrate this new concept into their health care systems. With this concept, both, pharmacists and doctors focus the patient who requires treatment. It is therefore extremely important that the pharmacist develops professional and scientific competence, with the goal of safe and effective use of medicines for patients. As a reference, please refer to the Application of GbCF document in Serbia, adopted by a panel of experts on 09.03.2012. This may have national significance because this document will be the starting point for further improvement of pharmacy practice in public pharmacies in Serbia, as Serbia has become already a part of a global development project.