Pharmacy Technicians: Past, Present and Future

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Pharmacy Welcome

► Greeting.
► Pharmacy technicians have had to adapt to many positive changes in their careers.
► We’ll look at the benefits of technology, drug distribution and responsibilities of technician.
The Past

- The role of the pharmacy technician began to be recognized in the 1960s.
- Technician were responsible for processing labels on manual typewriters and filling medication containers. As well they were involved with the purchasing and receiving.
- Pharmacists handled many of the IV preparations including chemotherapy and TPN.
The Past - Technology

- No computers systems
- No fax machines
- All orders were physically brought to the pharmacy
- All labels were typed or hand written
- There was a very small number of pharmacy technicians working and most were trained on the job.
Past-Drug Distribution System: Wardstock System

- Medications were stocked on the wards and the nurses had to pick the correct medications.
- This situation carried a high risk of medication administration errors.
- There is still currently ward stock but it is on a much narrower scope.
Unit Dose is a method of preparing medications in which individual doses of patient medications are prepared by the pharmacy and delivered in individually labeled packets to the patient's unit to be administered by the nurses on an ordered schedule.

One intent of unit dose is to decrease administration errors.
The past – pre-computers

► Enough said…
The Present

- Technology is used in pharmacies to increase accuracy, improve efficiency and quality of pharmacy services.
- Technology has enabled us to enhance our efficiencies in our workload for order entry and distribution and drug procurement.
- It also allows Pharmacists to spend more time on clinical activities.
Present - Pharmacy Computer Systems

- By linking inventory management, order entry and drug distribution we have streamlined day to day operations and improved patient safety.
- Technicians are able to replenish and stock Pyxis cabinets.
- Process Central IV admixture fills.
- Fill and charge ward stock in one process.
- Generate and receive purchase orders.
Present- Hospital Technology

Hospital pharmacies have a number of unique systems such as unit dose distribution, automated drug distribution, repackaging, ward stock, and an IV admixture/TPN service.
Present- Hospital Pyxis Technology

► Pyxis is an automated dispensing cabinet used at many of our WRHA hospitals.

► Pyxis interfaces with the ADT and pharmacy information systems.

► The advantages are:
  - More efficient and timely supply of medications to the patient
  - Increased medication safety
  - Automated narcotic management,
  - Automated Inventory management
  - Nursing has quick access to first doses and stat medication orders
  - Secure unit dose system
Structure of the Pharmacy

► WRHA Technicians now report to Technician Managers.

► The Pharmacy Technician Manager are responsible to ensure that the compounding, preparation and delivery of medications to patient care units meets high standards for quality and patient safety. Assumes professional responsibility for the operational management, coordination and delivery of technician services.

► The manager is responsible for the selection, training, and evaluation of pharmacy technicians, students and support staff.
Previously most Pharmacy Technicians were trained on the job. This has changed.

In Manitoba, Winnipeg Technical College has the only accredited pharmacy technician program.

Robertson College has gone through the accreditation process and are very close to having their pharmacy technician program accredited.
Professional Organizations

Professional societies provide an excellent means of keeping current and in touch with other professionals in the field.

These groups can play a key role in your development and keep you aware of what is happening in the pharmacy technician field.
Stay Informed

► National Association of Pharmacy Regulatory Authorities (NAPRA)
Document: Professional Competencies for Canadian Pharmacy Technicians at Entry to Practice

www.napra.ca

► Blueprint Documents, Join the Blueprint mailing list, stay informed. Pharmacy organizations are coming together, collaborating to implement the Vision for Pharmacy: Optimal drug therapy for Canadians

www.blueprintforpharmacy.ca
Stay Informed

► The Pharmacy Examining Board of Canada PEBC

www.pebc.ca

► The Canadian Association of Pharmacy Technicians

www.capt.ca
Exciting News

► Alberta Pharmacy Technicians will become Alberta’s newest regulated health professional on July 1, 2011.
► This means that like all other regulated health professionals, technicians will be required to demonstrate competency at entry to practice and throughout their careers, and must practice in compliance with established standards.
The Evolving Pharmacy Technicians

- The profession of pharmacy is changing and recognizes that pharmacy technicians have the skill set to take over more and more technical roles within pharmacy practice.

- It has become evident that with the shift of pharmacists from technical functions to increasing cognitive functions that the role of the pharmacy technician needs to be more clearly delineated.

- The future of the profession in Manitoba involves regulation to formalize the pharmacy technician role and to integrate it into pharmacy practice.
References

► Personal interview with Maureen Ayres and Barb Sproll, May 2011.


► Blumenfeld, M The Evolution of Pharmacy Practice - The Pharmacy Technician: *Journal of Pharmacy Practice* 2008