Competency Programs in Pharmacy Practice: Where Are We Today?

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Objectives

• Discuss the elements of competence in pharmacy practice
• Discuss competence standards in pharmacy practice
• Establish an effective competency program

Competence

Why is it important?

• Ensure effective, appropriate, and safe patient care
• In the best interest of patients, visitors, and staff
• Required by accreditation and professional organization standards
• Required by some laws and regulations

Polling Question

Competency assessment is especially important to my institution because:

a. Our current process is not well-structured
b. Accreditors have told us we need to improve
c. Our current process is stale
d. New performance expectations need to be integrated
e. Other

Defining Competence

The ability to perform a job according to defined expectations

Competent Individual:

• Possesses essential knowledge, skills, and abilities to perform the job
• Actually performs according to defined expectations

Components of Competence in Pharmacy Practice

- Education
- Licensure
- Registration
- Certification
- Experience
- Knowledge
- Skills
- Abilities
  - Attitudes
  - Values
  - Professionalism
  - Technical
  - Critical Thinking
  - Leadership
  - Interpersonal
### Polling Question
Which component of competence is the most challenging for me to assess?

1) Knowledge Base  
2) Technical Skills  
3) Interpersonal Skills  
4) Leadership Skills  
5) Clinical Decision Making

### What is a Competency?
- Variability of definitions in the literature
  - Dependent on variety of social, political, economic factors
  - Some common elements
- A definition using the common elements:
  
  A set of observable knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary for performing a job

  ➢ Use to set standards of performance that must be met

### Desirable Characteristics of a Competency
- Focus on the performance of the end-product or goal-state of instruction
- Reflect expectations that are an application of what is learned in the immediate instructional program
- Expressible in terms of measurable behavior
- Use a standard for judging competence that is not dependent upon the performance of other learners
- Inform learners, as well as other stakeholders, about what is expected of them

### Polling Question
**Pharmacotherapy Knowledge:** Demonstrate knowledge of hypertensive medications through performing in the top 80% of students on the course examination.

The above meets all 5 desirable characteristics of a competency.

1) True  
2) False (correct)

### The Performance Triad

![Diagram of the Performance Triad]

- **Job Description**
  - Defines qualifications and performance expectations
  - Performance expectations or standards are
    - Employee specific
    - Job-related (includes duties and responsibilities)
    - Measurable
  - Provides the basis for competencies required
  - Reviewed and updated periodically to reflect current practice
Competence Assessment

- Validates the ability to perform to minimum defined expectations (i.e., competencies)
- Competencies must be
  - Pre-defined
  - Objective
  - Measurable
  - Related to job-specific performance standards
- Includes processes for feedback, mentoring, and remediation
- Ongoing at defined intervals

Performance Evaluation

- Evaluates overall job performance
  - Measures how well one performs
- Evaluates performance standards in job description
- Not a substitute for competence assessment
  - Can consolidate into a simultaneous activity
- Includes processes for feedback, mentoring, and remediation
- Performed at defined intervals

CMS and Accreditation Standards

Requirements and Expectations:

- Organization defines competencies to be assessed
- **However,** the standards mention
  - Specific competencies
  - Specific areas of competence
    - High-risk, low volume, problem-prone procedures
    - New/updated procedures, technology, equipment, duties
    - Need for improvement identified through QA/PI indicators
    - Required by laws and regulations
  - Some standards mention performance by “qualified” or “competent” individuals

CMS and Accreditation Standards

Requirements and Expectations (cont.):

- Use objective, measurable criteria to assess competence
- Competence assessed initially and at intervals defined by
  - The organization
  - Laws and regulations
  - Accrediting organization-specific intervals
- Competence is documented

Competence Standards in Pharmacy Practice

- Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS)
  - Conditions of Participation and Interpretive Guidelines
- Accreditation Standards
  - The Joint Commission
  - National Integrated Accreditation for Healthcare Organizations (NIAHOSM)
  - Healthcare Facilities Accreditation Program (HFAP)
- Differences in terminology:
  - Competence assessment vs performance assessment

Pharmacy-related Organizations:

- Pharmacy Professional Organizations
  - Pharmacists: ACCP, ASHP, APhA, ASCP
  - Technicians: AAPT, NPTA, ASHP, APHA
- Residency, Fellowship, and Certification Programs
  - Examples: BPS, ASHP, PTCB
- Other Pharmacy Organizations
  - Examples: ACPE, NABP
Competence Standards in Pharmacy Practice

Other Sources of Competence Standards:
- Regulatory
  - Boards of Pharmacy
  - State scope of practice acts
- United States Pharmacopeia (USP)
  - Examples: sterile compounding, non-sterile compounding
- ACLS and BLS certification programs
- Organization-specific
  - Examples: fire safety, emergency management, infection prevention

Polling Question

Laws/regulations in my state limit the ability to develop new staff roles and competencies needed to implement practice model change.
1) Yes
2) No
3) Unsure

Education and Training in Competency Programs

- Essential for providing the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities
- Types of education and training programs
  - Didactic
  - Experiential
- Technology has greatly expanded methods of delivery
  - Examples: Web-based training, computer-assisted simulations, patient robots
- Most effective if developed in a competency format

Methods of Assessing Competence

- Cognitive Testing
  - Primarily evaluates factual knowledge
  - May include basic abstract problem-solving
- Simulation
  - Usually in form of case studies
  - Integrates application of knowledge, skills, and abilities in problem-solving
- Observation
  - Evaluates competence in actual “real-life” practice
  - Involves evaluation of a process or end product of performance
- Combination of methods

Polling Question

In my opinion, what is the most effective method of assessing competence?
1) Cognitive testing
2) Simulations
3) Observation
4) A combination of methods
Competence: When to Assess

- Orientation
- Education and training
- New/updated duties and responsibilities
- New/updated procedures, technology, equipment
- Need for improvement identified through quality/performance indicators
- As required by laws and regulations
- Ongoing assessment of critical competencies

Polling Question

In my institution, what is the most effective method of scheduling ongoing competence assessment?

1) Annual "skills assessment" days
2) Assessments assigned throughout the year
3) Individual-directed

Documenting Competence

Documentation should include

- Date of assessment
- Reason for assessment
- Method(s) of assessment
- Outcome of assessment
- Recommendations for improvement
- Date of re-evaluation or next assessment

Barriers to Effective Competency Programs

- Complexity of organization's program
- "One size fits all" approach by organizations
- Staff question need to evaluate their competence
- Failure to review and update competencies to reflect current practice
- Inadequate training and education resources
- Lack of time and resources to perform assessments

Polling Question

What is the primary barrier to an effective competency program in my institution?

1) Complexity of the organization's program
2) Failure to review and update competencies
3) Lack of time and resources to perform assessments
4) Staff attitudes regarding the need to evaluate competence
5) Inadequate resources for training and education

Polling Question

We need to invest more __________ in competency development.

a. Human resources
b. Fiscal resources
c. Educational resources
d. Other resources
e. We have the proper investment
Elements of an Effective Competency Program

- Job Descriptions
- Defined Competencies
- Consistent Documentation
- Review & Update
- Education Training CPD
- Qualified Assessors
- Ongoing Assessment
- Feedback
- Mentoring