



Conclusions and proposals for improving the education received by future pharmacists

The 2017 survey on access to the labour market shows that more than half of the individuals who graduate in Pharmacy are working in pharmacies. Nevertheless, it is not the only career opportunity available to them and undergraduate education should ensure that they are initially well prepared for all the opportunities they encounter.

Despite the variety of career opportunities awaiting graduates of Pharmacy, it is clear that there is a need to ensure all individuals who graduate in this field possess the skills needed to work in pharmacies, since the qualification certifies they are indeed able to and there is no other study programme offered to deliver the right education to these professionals.

The profession has moved away from its focus on the pharmaceutical product in order to be centred on the patient. Pharmacies are part of the system that endeavours to improve patients' quality of life and they are in a privileged position to do so since there is the broadest accessibility. The perspective is that of a professional pharmaceutical service rooted in the healthcare system.

Pharmacies give a positive assessment of the education received, albeit with two areas for improvement:

- The ability to provide therapeutic advice in drug therapy and diet therapy (shortcomings with this skill were reported by 76% of pharmacies).
- The ability to engage in health promotion and disease prevention activities (shortcomings with this skill were reported by 64% of pharmacies).

In order to improve the acquisition of these skills, the following proposals for improvement are made which are derived from the seminar "The opinion of pharmacies regarding the education received by graduates. Future challenges" held on 21 November 2018:

- ✓ To **review the teaching methodologies and/or planning** of the Bachelor's degree in Pharmacy: current education should be reviewed to ensure that the patient is at the core of this training. For instance, this may be done by ensuring that the subjects taught deal in greater depth with the most common conditions reported among patients visiting pharmacies.
- ✓ To **assess a modification in the assessment of tutored external training placements**. For instance, this may involve a **role-play or simulation** method in which individuals demonstrate the ability to assure that patients receive the correct information on a



medication in the pharmacy, that they are able to suitably answer queries, or that they are able to suitably engage in protecting the health of the people they are assisting.

- ✓ To enhance **the management and monitoring of tutored external training placements** ensuring that students suitably work on pharmaceutical care and their ability to offer advice and promote health. In this respect, it is recommended to consider the option of students undertaking tutored external training placements before the final year of the Bachelor's degree in order to enhance their knowledge of the community pharmacy. Moreover, students would need to benefit from more information about the place where they will undertake their training.
- ✓ To work on **personal skills** (such as communication and empathy) in the various subjects of the Bachelor's degree throughout the whole education cycle.
- ✓ As far as possible, the Bachelor's degree should ensure that graduates are familiar with the services that are provided by pharmacies. Along these lines, it could be interesting **to forge closer ties between professional associations and universities** to gain a better acquaintance of the services offered by a pharmacy and to promote lifelong learning in future.
- ✓ As far as possible, to endeavour to incorporate an activity in which pharmacists have the chance to **interact with other healthcare professionals** (from the Medicine and Nursing fields).

In short, the goal of these proposals is to ensure that the education assessment system guarantees that skills where shortcomings are reported may be achieved.