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DETERMINANTS OF PHARMACISTS' PROFESSIONAL FORMATION AND OCCUPATIONAL DEVELOPMENT: A MULTIDIMENSIONAL EVALUATION

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 განმსაზღვრელი ფაქტორები: მრავალგანზომილებიანი შეფასება

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რეზიუმე

მოცემული კვლევა ეხება იმ ძირითად დეტარმინანტებს, რომლებიც განსაზღვრავენ
 თარმაცევტების პროფესიული ჩამოყალიბებისა და პროფესიული განვითარების პროცესს
 საქართველოში. რაოდენობრივი მეთოდოლოგიის გამოყენებით, ჩატარდა მასშტაბური
 გამოკითხვა, რომელშიც მონაცილეობა მიიღო 3,888-მა რესპონდენტმა, მათ შორის
 თარმაცევტებმა, თარმაციის სტუდენტებმა, ჟანდაცვის სპეციალისტებმა და აფთიაქის
 მომსმარებლებმა. შედეგებმა აჩვენა მნიშვნელოვანი ხარვეზები თარმაცევტების სერტიფიცირებაში,
 უწყვეტ პროფესიულ განათლებაში, ჟანდაცვის სპეციალისტებთან თანამშრომლობისა და
 რეგულაციური შხარდაჭერის მიმართულებით. სტატისტიკურად სარწმუნო კორელაცია
 გამოვლინდა რესპონდენტთა განათლების დონესა და სერტიფიცირების აუცილებლობის
 მხარდაჭერას შორის. რესპონდენტებმა გამოთქვეს სწავლების პროგრამების მოდერნიზების,
 კლინიკური უნარების გაღრმავებისა და სახელმწიფო რეგულაციების გაუმჯობესების საჭიროება.
 კვლევა ავითარებს სტრატეგიულ რეკომენდაციებს, რომელთა მიზანია თარმაცევტების როლის
 გაძლიერება ეროვნულ ჟანდაცვის სისტემაში, მათ შორის პროფესიული ლიცენზირების,
 საგანმანათლებლო რეფორმისა და ინტერდისკიპლინური ინტეგრაციის გზით.

Introduction: The role of pharmacists globally has undergone considerable transformation, moving beyond traditional dispensing roles toward integrated responsibilities in clinical care, public health, and medication therapy management. In Georgia, however, pharmacists continue to encounter systemic challenges in career development, public recognition, and institutional support. These challenges impede their capacity to contribute optimally to healthcare delivery. In recent decades, the pharmacy profession has undergone a significant transformation worldwide. Pharmacists are no longer seen solely as dispensers of medication but as vital healthcare providers who contribute to patient outcomes through clinical services, pharmaceutical care, and health education. This shift has been accompanied by increased responsibilities, the need for continuous professional development, and integration into multidisciplinary healthcare teams. However, in Georgia, the evolution of the pharmacist's role has been slower and faces several systemic barriers. Despite advancements in global pharmacy education and practice standards, Georgian pharmacists often contend with outdated educational curricula, limited opportunities for postgraduate training, inconsistent licensing mechanisms, and insufficient institutional support.

Furthermore, societal awareness regarding the pharmacist's professional capabilities remains limited, affecting the perception of their role within healthcare delivery.

Goal: The main aim of the research was to study and analyze some key issue determinants of pharmacists' professional formation and occupational development, in multidimensional evaluation.

Methodology: Research objectives are materials of sociological research: the study was quantitative investigation by using surveys. The in-depth interview method of the respondents was used in the study. The approved questionnaires were used. Questionnaire for pharmacist specialist, health care specialists, pharmacy students and patients. The data was processed and analyzed with the SPSS program.

Results and discussion: The study reveals that the professional formation and occupational development of pharmacists in Georgia are shaped by multiple interrelated factors, including educational quality, regulatory frameworks, job satisfaction, and societal perceptions. Despite growing global recognition of pharmacists as integral members of healthcare teams, the profession in Georgia continues to face challenges that limit its potential impact on patient care and public health. The findings underscore a clear need for reform in pharmacy education, with curricula requiring modernization to meet contemporary clinical and pharmacological standards. Equally important is the implementation of a comprehensive system of certification and continuous professional development to ensure pharmacists maintain high levels of competence throughout their careers.

Pharmacists' Role in Patient Care and Collaboration: When asked whether pharmacists should be responsible for educating patients on the use of prescribed medications, 79.5% of healthcare professionals answered affirmatively. However, only 25.4% considered pharmacists to be co-responsible for treatment decisions alongside physicians. This dichotomy suggests a partially integrated role, where pharmacists are valued as educators but not yet fully recognized as clinical decision-makers. To improve this, interprofessional training modules and collaborative practice models should be introduced into both medical and pharmacy education.

Certification and Competency Gaps: A significant proportion of healthcare specialists and the public advocated for mandatory pharmacist certification, with highly educated respondents expressing stronger support ($p<0.04$). Certification was perceived as vital for ensuring medication safety and elevating professional accountability.

Education and Curriculum Deficiencies: Surveyed pharmacists and students overwhelmingly agreed on the necessity of curriculum modernization to include pharmacotherapy, clinical pharmacy, drug interactions, and adverse effect monitoring. Satisfaction with pharmacy education remains moderate, signaling the need for structural reform.

Collaboration and Role Recognition: Health professionals largely acknowledged that pharmacists should aid in patient education, but fewer saw pharmacists as co-responsible for treatment. This reflects a fragmented interprofessional dynamic and necessitates better integration into care teams.

The study underscores the importance of addressing the systemic factors that shape pharmacists' occupational roles in Georgia. Strategic interventions must include: Mandatory licensure and continuous certification; Reform of pharmacy education programs aligned with global standards; Enhanced interprofessional collaboration; Increased access to postgraduate training and workplace support.

Conclusion: This study reveals that the professional formation and occupational development of pharmacists in Georgia are shaped by multiple interrelated factors, including educational quality, regulatory frameworks, job satisfaction, and societal perceptions. Despite growing global recognition of pharmacists as integral members of healthcare teams, the profession in Georgia continues to face challenges that limit its potential impact on patient care and public health. The findings underscore a clear need for reform in pharmacy education, with curricula requiring modernization to meet contemporary clinical and pharmacological standards. Equally important is the implementation of a comprehensive system of certification and continuous professional development to ensure pharmacists maintain high levels of competence throughout their careers. The research also highlights a gap in interprofessional collaboration and role clarity, both within the healthcare workforce and in the public's understanding of pharmacists' responsibilities. Ultimately, enhancing the pharmacy profession in Georgia demands coordinated efforts across government, academia, healthcare institutions, and professional bodies. By adopting international best practices and supporting the development of pharmacists through structured education, licensing, and professional growth opportunities, Georgia can ensure that its pharmacists are well-equipped to contribute meaningfully to an evolving healthcare landscape.

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SUMMARY

This study investigates the principal determinants shaping the professional formation and occupational development of pharmacists in Georgia. Employing a quantitative methodology, the research utilized a stratified questionnaire-based survey comprising 3,888 respondents, including pharmacists, pharmacy students, healthcare specialists, and patients. Results reveal critical gaps in pharmacists' certification, continuing education, interprofessional collaboration, and regulatory support. A significant correlation was found between education levels and support for mandatory pharmacist certification. Respondents expressed a need for curriculum modernization, enhanced clinical training, and improved government oversight. The study concludes with strategic recommendations to strengthen the pharmacy profession's role in the national healthcare framework, emphasizing professional licensing, education reform, and integration into interdisciplinary medical teams.

Keywords: Pharmacists, Professional Formation, Education, Healthcare Regulation, Georgia