

Pharmaceutical Services: a field under consolidation

According to the WHO, Pharmaceutical Services are a “group of services and activities related to medicines destined to support the health actions demanded by the community.” The role of this ‘operational’ set must be implemented through sequential and complementary actions ensuring that users receive quality services and supplies to obtain successful pharmacotherapy.

In the countries of Latin and North America, the term Pharmaceutical Services reveals a more restricted vision of the field, focused on the organization and provision of services and actions that involve medicines. Pharmaceutical Services were established in Brazil in the last thirty years, initially conforming a restricted field of practice of the pharmaceutical profession, but has subsequently assumed a broader meaning, encompassing research and development and the use of medicines, thereby including professionals of various extractions in health, technology, and the social sciences. Over time, the field has been evolving increasingly in the sense of incorporating new areas and knowledge and developing into a multi-professional and multi-sectorial field. Pharmaceutical Services began to reveal the various interfaces that permeate the joint work related to medicines for the attainment of health outcomes. This diversity confers wholeness, complementarity and complexity to the field of Pharmaceutical Services in Brazil.

The thematic edition on Pharmaceutical Services strives to show the varied scope of action and the insertion of multiple health professionals on the theme. Nowadays, many people write well and at length about Pharmaceutical Services. It is especially important to highlight the appropriation of Pharmaceutical Services by Public Health, resulting in the recognition of the role of medicines and services in health actions. This has been a successful union.

The Brazilian Association of Public Health has always opened its doors to the field. Therefore, it is highly appropriate that this issue should appear in the *Ciência e Saúde Coletiva* Journal. The CSC has been receiving a good deal of the national output on Pharmaceutical Services with ever increasing quality, reflecting the enhanced training of the health professionals involved and the vigor of the research on the theme. This large influx of articles implies greater competition, but at the same time, and as a result, in the permanent presence of the field in the the Journal’s pages.

The edition was organized in order to bring together different aspects related to the topic, although it was not the intention –nor is it even possible – to exhaust the scope of Pharmaceutical Services. The debate focuses on the UN High Level Panel on Access to Medicines and its implications. An analysis of advances of the Brazilian Medicines Policy, as well as future challenges, is presented. A series of articles that highlight the practice of Pharmaceutical Services at different levels of healthcare follows, succeeded by an analysis of current programs and policies, as well as timely and important issues related to production, marketing, care and rational use of medicines. Two articles focus on themes that transcend the frontiers of the country. Two systematic reviews and a book review complete the syllabus.

This thematic edition was initially conceived as a celebration of the 20th anniversary of the Center of Pharmaceutical Policies, a PAHO/WHO Collaborating Center on Medicines Policy, and, since 2015, the Department of Medicines Policy and Pharmaceutical Services of the Sérgio Arouca National School of Public Health of the Oswaldo Cruz Foundation. The enlisting of academic partners from other institutions, namely those closest to our collaborative network was considered necessary to make the celebration more inclusive. The result is a varied thematic number, in a way resembling of our common field of work.

Pleasant Reading!

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Erratum

p. 2433

where it reads:

Pharmaceutical Assistance: a field in the process of consolidation

reads up:

Pharmaceutical Services: a field under consolidation

where it reads:

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reads up:

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