



Editorial

Alternative & complementary medicine as career after pharmacy graduation

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ABSTRACT

Alternative and complementary medicine has been derived from the natural medicine and can be considered as applied pharmacognosy. The applied pharmacognosy for patient treatment is based on Herbal Medicine concepts. The field of Alternative and Complementary medicine also includes Naturopathic Medicine which is also a part of applied pharmacognosy which the undergraduate students in pharmacy study for 4-year course. This editorial gives the legal status of such practices and career option for the pharmacist who have completed graduation in Pharmacy.

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1. Introduction

Alternative medicine: As per National Cancer Institute, Bethesda, US, it is used instead of standard medical treatment. One example is using a special diet to treat cancer instead of cancer drugs that are prescribed by an oncologist. Less research has been done for most types of alternative medicine.

Complementary Medicine: As per National Cancer Institute, Bethesda, US, It is used along with standard medical treatment but is not considered by itself to be standard treatment. One example is using acupuncture to help lessen some side effects of cancer treatment. Less research has been done for most types of complementary medicine.

Alternative and Complementary Medicine is not paramedical science and is practiced as general practitioner, rather as GP at private clinic basis.

Whatsoever the practice may be, anything that serves to prove the Human Health and for the benefit of mankind is considered as act of practising nobility. Further alternative

and complementary medicine is considered to be a pivotal significance where modern medicine fails.

2. Distinction from AYUSH Practitioners

At Indian Scenario, the AYUSH practitioners are at the second level in hierarchy of healthcare givers. The AYUSH physicians adopt many treatment strategies to be considered safe and belong to the practice of core Alternative and Complementary Medicine. Naturopathic Treatments, the mother of AYUSH and Alternative and Complementary medicine was developed by Charaka and subsequent Samhitas in Ayurveda. Which means that the basis of the Ayurvedic Treatment is Naturopathy derived from the natural herbs, ways, and protocols.

3. Where Does Pharmacy Graduates Match with AYUSH Practitioners & Alternative and Complementary Medicine

As, elaborated in many editorials, the Pharmacy graduates study Clinical Pharmacology principles for 4 years which is integrated Pathophysiology, Clinical Biochemistry,

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Medicinal Chemistry and of course the basis of all therapies Human Anatomy and Physiology. Further the additional Pharmacognosy is additional advantage and nothing but Herbal Medicine and compounded Ayurveda in Botanical nomenclature form and herbal medicine itself.

Although Pharmacist are not entitled to use prefix "Dr" for 4 year graduation course they earn professional doctrine Degree of Doctor of Pharmacy or Pharm. D, it's not a Doctorate by Post graduate degree after B.Pharm for Post Baccalaureate Course. Further Specializations at Doctorate or PhD level can be basis to prefix "Dr". Hopefully Fellow graduate pharmacist enjoy the title "Drx" after Graduation and Diploma in Pharmacy only in India.

Considering the reliable sources of data and new age scientific data of Hierarchy of Modern Medicine and all Medicine Practitioners the following chart has been given (Source from Wikipedia):

4. Clinicians

4.1. Physician

1. Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery (MBBS)
2. Doctor of Medicine (M D)
3. Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine (D. O.)

4.2. Dentist

1. Bachelor of Dental Surgery (BDS)
2. Doctor of Dental Medicine (DMD)
3. Doctor of Dental Surgery (DDS)

4.3. Optometrist

Doctor of Optometry (OD)

4.4. Podiatrist

Doctor of Podiatry (DPM)

4.5. Chiropractor

1. Doctor of Chiropractic (DC)
2. Physician Assistant (PA)
 - (a) Doctor of Medical Science (D Med Sc, (D M Sc)
 - (b) Master of Medical Science (M Med Sc, (M M Sc)
 - (c) Master of Physician Assistant Studies (M P A S)
 - (d) Professional (Second-entry Bachelor of Science in Physician Assistant (B Sc PA,[3] (B H Sc PA

4.6. Pharmacist (R.Ph.)

1. Doctor of Pharmacy (PharmD)
2. Master of Pharmacy (MPharm)
3. Bachelor of Pharmacy (B Pharm)

5. Medical Researchers

1. Philosophiae Doctor (Ph D)
2. Dr mr (Doctor of Medical Research)

6. Allied Health Professionals

Respiratory practitioner (aka "respiratory therapist" or "respiratory care practitioner") (RRT, CRT)

1. Associate of Science in Respiratory Therapy (ASRT)
2. Bachelor of Science in Respiratory Therapy (BSRT)
3. Master of Science in Respiratory Therapy (MSRT)

Paramedic (NRP)Emergency Medical Technician (EMT-B, EMT-I, EMT-IV, EMT-I/99, EMT-I/89, NREMT, NRAEMT)

7. Athletic Trainer (ATC)

1. Bachelor of Science in Athletic Trainer (BS)
2. Masters of Athletic Training (MSAT, MAT)
3. CAATE
4. Board of Certification, Inc (ATC)

8. Dietician

1. Registered Dietitian (RD)
2. Registered Dietitian Nutritionist (RDN)

Radiographer and specialties

Varies by country, see main article.

8.1. Occupational therapist

1. Master of Occupational Therapy (MOT)
2. Doctor of Occupational Therapy (OTD)

8.2. Physical therapist

1. Master of Physical Therapy (MPT)
2. Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT)

Speech therapist/Speech-Language Pathologist

- Speech and Language Pathologist (SLP)

8.3. Music therapist

1. Board Certified Music Therapist (MT-BC)
2. Master of Music Therapy (MMT)

8.4. Surgical technologist

1. Associate of Applied Science in Surgical Technology
2. Medical Laboratory Technician/Medical Laboratory Scientist/Medical Technologist (MLT, MLS, MT)
3. Associate of Science in Medical (Clinical) Laboratory Sciences (ASMLS, ASCLS, degrees, MLT Certification Eligible if from a NAACLS accredited program)

4. Bachelor of Science in Medical (Clinical) Laboratory Sciences (BSMT, BSMLS, BSCLS degrees, MLS Certification Eligible if from a NAACLS accredited program)
5. Masters of Science in Medical (Clinical) Laboratory Sciences (MSMLS, MSCLS degrees)
6. Doctor of Science in Clinical Laboratory Sciences (DSCLS degree)

9. Nursing

Registered nurse (RN)

1. Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP)
2. Master of Science in Nursing (MSN)
3. Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN)
4. Associate of Science in Nursing (ASN)
5. Diploma in Nursing
6. Practical nurse (PN, LPN, VN)
7. Certified anesthesiologist assistant (CAA)

10. Assistant

1. Nurse aide (CNA)
2. Nurse technician (CNT)
3. Care partner (CP)

11. Medical Assistants

1. Certified Medical Assistant (CMA)
2. Certified Medical Assistant - Admin (CMA-A)
3. Certified Medical Assistant - Clinical (CMA-C)
4. Certified Medical Assistant - Admin and Clinical (CMA-AC)
5. Registered Medical Assistant (RMA)
6. Medical Assistant (MA)
7. Certified Clinical Medical Assistant (CCMA)
8. Certified Medical Administrative Assistant (CMAA)

12. Pharmacy Technician

Certified Pharmacy Technician (CPhT)

13. Therapy Assistants

Physical therapy assistant (PTA)

Associate of Applied Science in Physical Therapist Assistant

Occupational therapy assistant

Associate of Applied Science in Occupational Therapy Assistant (AAS OTA) (COTA)

14. Alternative Medicine

1. Naturopaths
2. Naturopathy (ND)

Back to the point, Alternative Medicine and Complementary Medicine are the least credentialled at WORLD level and the system is reverse in India.

However, this editorial is focusing on the brief aspects of Pharmacy Graduates to pursue a career in alternative and Complementary medicine.

15. Courses in Alternative and Complementary Medicine

There are several courses, rather than doing the core Alternative and Complementary Medicine courses one should go for traditional Diploma in Alternative Medicine and Doctor of Medicine in Alternative Medicine. The courses such as Hijama Therapist, Cupping Therapist, Accu-pressure and Su-jok Therapist are choice based but the Diploma and Post graduate Course IN Alternative Medicine such as D.A.M.S. and MD (AM) are better choices.

15.1. Naturopathy

Doctor of Naturopathy (ND) and DNYS (Diploma in Naturopathy and Yogic Sciences), further this is in line with National Yoga Propagation Mission of Indian Government.

15.2. Eligibility

Bachelor of Pharmacy or B.Pharm is eligible to pursue Doctor of Medicine in Alternative Medicine and Complementary Medicine. Further one should see these courses as bridge course to practice Medicine.

16. Legal Status in India

As per Hon. Supreme Court verdict of Oct 2023 and Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, the practice of Alternative Medicine is valid and the Diploma and Postgraduate Doctor of Medicine in Alternative Medicine can practice this course through out India.

17. Councils

Currently Ministry of Health and Family Welfare is under construction for the Council for Alternative and Complementary Medicine, however the practitioners can practice.

18. Municipal Corporation Registration

MD (AM) after B.Pharm can practice with License from Municipal Corporation. However can practice his own stream of Modern Medicine (Allopathy) as well as Herbal Medicine. Except Surgeries / Gynaecology /Radiology. However can perform minor surgeries as per the definition of First aid. (up to 8 stitches)

19. Licence to Practice Allopathy After MD (AM) after Pharmacy Graduation

1. *CMSED*: Diploma in Community Medical Service and Essential Services is a Bridge course that can be studied if an incumbent wants to practice Allopathy after MD (AM). Speciality of this course is that it is recognized by *World Health Organization (WHO)* and recommended as Bridge course in India and worldwide. Some Universities conduct this course and Pharmacy graduates (B. Pharmacy) along with clinicians only are eligible for this Course, as per the hierarchy outlined in this editorial. Also can practice Gynaecology to some extent. (Pl. refer syllabi of some renowned universities)
2. *CPCP*: Certification in Principles of Clinical Pharmacology, a six months course for Pharmacy graduates is conducted by National Institutes of Health, Department of Health and Human Services, Govt. of USA. Unfortunately, USA doesn't recognize AYUSH practitioner eligible for this course. Although the course is online but considered as standard licensure examination in many countries to practice allopathy as per WHO.
3. *CCP*: Certification in Basics of Pharmacology: A six months course for Pharmacy graduates is conducted by Harvard Medical School, Boston, by Dean of Medical Education, Directorate of Distance Learning in Medical courses. Only Pharmacy and Modern Medicine Practitioners are considered valid and doesn't recognize AYUSH practitioners for this course by Harvard Medical School. Considered as Non-Credit Point based course and one of the parameters for the licensure to practice Allopathy in many countries as per WHO.

4. *CCGP*: Certification in General Practice conducted by Royal College of General Practitioners, United Kingdom. Doctor of Pharmacy graduates are considered eligible and Doctorate specialized Pharmacists by RCGP.

20. Reversal of License by State Pharmacy Council

The councils approving MD (AM), do not require reversing or surrender the license of State Pharmacy Council as, B.Pharm is the eligibility for the same. Neither the State Councils have such a constraint for the Alternative Medicine Practitioners through Pharmacy background.

21. Indian Scenario of Medical (All Streams) Professionals

There is huge shortage of Medical staffs of all streams at the Primary Health centre level . Increase in intake of admissions shall not solve the problem of serving the Nation unless the professionals really intend to serve the Nation by will. However, this is not shortcut , but well deserved way of bridging interdisciplinary courses for the good faith, good health and well-being of existence of all professions and patients.

Jai Hind.

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