



Tehran University of Medical Sciences
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Title:

**Exploring the Ethical Challenges of Pharmacy Practice in
community pharmacies and Evaluating the Pharmacists attitude
toward them: Instrument Development and Psychometrics**

**A thesis submitted as partial fulfillment of the requirements for Doctor of
philosophy Degree**

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Abstract:

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Introduction:

The pharmacy profession is a knowledge-based profession that, like other professions, has developed along with the development of science and technology, and has defined and created new professional and ethical responsibilities for its professionals. During these decades, the pharmacy profession changed from the production of herbal medicines to chemical products, and the task of pharmacists changed from the traditional method of prescription to a new global approach called pharmaceutical care. But in practice, it seems that pharmacists are not successful in achieving this goal. Therefore, exploring the ethical challenges of pharmacy professionals that hinder the practice of the profession can pave the way for providing a solution and solving the current problem of the pharmaceutical system in providing pharmaceutical care.

Objectives:

The major purpose of this study was to identify the existing ethical challenges of pharmacists in providing pharmaceutical care services in community pharmacies which were followed by instrument development for assessing pharmacists' attitudes toward these challenges.

Method:

This study was a mixed exploratory study consisting of two phases: qualitative and quantitative. In the qualitative phase, after the literature review, semi-structured interviews were conducted with pharmacists working in community pharmacies. The transcripts of the interviews were analyzed by qualitative content analysis method and organizing a focus group discussion session. Then, the rules and regulations of pharmaceutical affairs were analyzed based on the ethical rules; the ethical challenges of the regulations were clarified and finalized in a focus group discussion with experts. Finally, qualitative data were used to design the tool, and items were generated. Then face validity, content validity, structural validity, and instrument reliability were assessed.

Results:

In the qualitative study, ethical challenges were classified into one main theme called Pharmacy Practice, and three categories included pharmacy practice, professional communication, and challenges related to rules and regulations. Ethical analysis of the country's pharmaceutical laws and regulations showed ٢٤ ethical challenges, of which ١٣ were related to various laws and ١١ were related to organizational and administrative regulations. In the section of quantitative study and instrumentation, using the data of the qualitative section, item generation was performed for questionnaire development. KMO index was ٠,٩٢٢ and Bartlett sphericity test was significant. In exploratory factor analysis, three factors were extracted, namely challenges related to rules and regulations, professional communication, and medication consultation, and pharmaceutical care. The reliability of the questionnaire was

evaluated using Cronbach's alpha (internal consistency) that was 0,919 and the intra-cluster correlation (ICC) as 0,914 and the standard error (SE) that was 0,09. Finally, a reliable and valid instrument was designed with 22 questions.

Conclusions:

The most important ethical challenges for pharmacists in providing pharmaceutical care services in community pharmacies were related to the professional commitment of pharmacists. Other challenges, such as professional communication, were also influential. Identifying these ethical challenges and evaluating the attitude of pharmacists using valid tools can be effective in rooting out the problems of the pharmaceutical profession and providing an effective solution to improve the professional position of pharmacists, using effective educational approaches, and reform policies and laws and regulations.

Keywords: Pharmacy Ethics, pharmacy practice, Ethical Challenges, Pharmaceutical Care