



Service Priorities and Programmes
Electronic Presentations

Convention ID: 827

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The development of a competency framework for pharmacists and dispensers providing cancer drug services

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Keywords:

cancer

competency

Introduction

Pharmacists and dispensers specializing in the provision of cancer drug services should be ensured that they are competent to perform their duties and that their practical skills and clinical knowledge are current and standardized, to safeguard patient safety and ensure product quality.

Objectives

This competency framework was developed with an aim to provide pharmacists and dispensers working in the provision of cancer drug services the practical skills and clinical knowledge to be able to confidently and competently perform their duties to ensure patient safety as well as product quality. It also encourages best practices and accountability related to the training and assessment during cancer drug preparation processes.

Methodology

The competency framework was developed after extensive literature search from various databases available in the HA intranet, together with existing documents that were developed previously, with modification to reflect local practices. Oncology pharmacists in PYNEH were asked to review the framework, with the input of dispensers regarding its content and applicability. A pilot programme was carried out to assess the competencies of a few pharmacists and dispensers who were working in this specialized area for quite some time, to ensure that the framework was applicable and relevant.

Result

A competency framework was developed with a number of assessments in check list format. The gaps in clinical knowledge and practical skills were easily identified using the assessment check lists, and relevant training were provided to close the gaps. Hence skills and knowledge were standardized and best practices were encouraged. As a result, the quality of products were ensured and patients safety in receiving cancer drug therapies safeguarded.