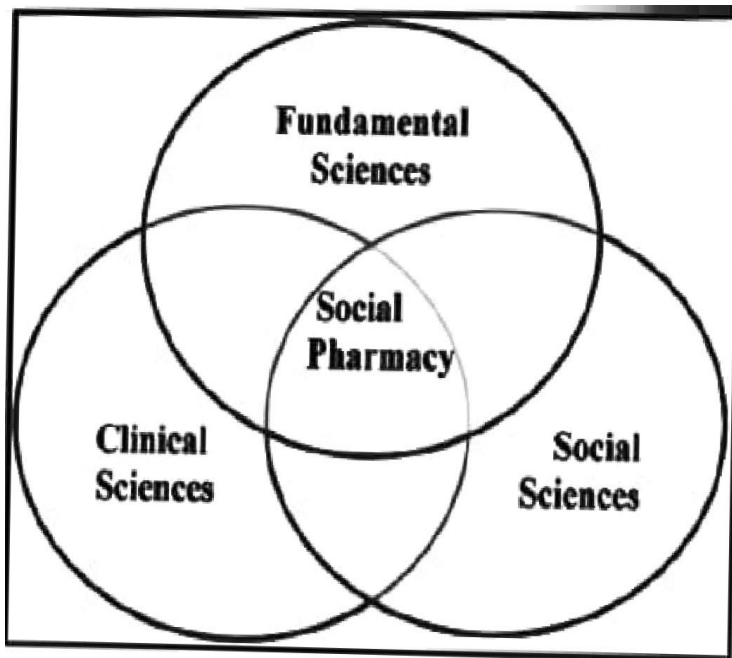


What is social pharmacy?

Social pharmacy may be defined as the discipline dealing with the role of medicines from the social, scientific and humanistic perspectives. It draws on theories of the social and behavioural sciences, and includes health psychology. Social pharmacy can be considered to consist of all the social factors that influence medicine use, such as medicine-related beliefs, regulations, policy, attitudes, medicine information, ethics and behaviour. However, there have been several approaches for definition of social pharmacy by many authors and researchers. One group of authors have attempted to define a widely accepted term of social pharmacy as, "The endeavor to integrate drugs into a broader perspective and to include legal, ethical, economic, political, social, communicative, and psychological aspects into their evaluation in order to contribute to the safe and rational use of drugs"

Social pharmacy enables the pharmacy profession to act and take responsibility in its full scope with the problems of pharmacy and medicines in society. What is the most appropriate treatment of an illness, in a cost effective way and with a safe medicine? The answers lie with social pharmacy research, training and teaching. Social pharmacy will play more crucial role in future pharmacy. In its attempts to restructure pharmacy practice in consonance with global role, pharmacy education in India had come as single roadblock. The need of the hour is a paradigm shift in the structure of pharmacy education. There is need to incorporate pharmaceutical sociology component in the current curriculum so that pharmacy graduates can fulfill professional obligations as a health care personnel. It is important all of us work together to make an attempt to develop curriculum in this area of research and teaching.



Scope of Social Pharmacy in Improving Public Health

- 1) Social pharmacy is termed as a discipline concerned with the behavioural sciences related to the use of medicines by consumers as well as healthcare professionals.
- 2) Along with behavioural and psychological perspectives allied to pharmacy, pharmaceutical administration areas, like pharmacy management and marketing, are also fundamental components of social pharmacy.
- 3) The acceptance of innovative patient-oriented roles for pharmacy, like medication adherence, counselling, and home medicine review, focuses on a patient-centred role.
- 4) The information present in social pharmacy is very important to link the clinical and fundamental knowledge taught to the pharmacists.
- 5) A proficient pharmacist is certified to incorporate his/her knowledge and social/communication skills for improving patient's behaviour, treatment outcomes, and disease management.

Role of Pharmacists in Public Health

- 1) They provide population-based care.
- 2) They conduct disease prevention and control programs (including, medication safety programs) in their institutions and communities.

- 3) They develop health education policies and programs within their institutions concerned with the needs of patients, health care professionals, community leaders, and the public.
- 4) They collaborate with state and local authorities, involving local and state health departments and boards of health, to address local and regional health care needs (such as, environmental hazard and emergency preparedness programs).
- 5) They advocate for sound legislation, regulations, and public policy related to disease prevention and management.
- 6) They involve in population-based research and also initiate campaigns for distributing new knowledge.
- 7) They put a positive influence on drug policy, drug use and outcomes as well as other health care aspects in collaboration with other health professionals at a community level.
- 8) They participate in formulation of drug policy, comprising of drug regulation.
- 9) They develop guidelines and criteria for formularies.
- 10) They collaborate with other health care professionals to develop treatment guidelines.
- 11) They design and observe procurement and drug distribution systems, along with drug storage and disposal (e.g., country wide, local, institutional).
- 12) They formulate and manufacture quality medications within pharmacy practice.
- 13) They work as a source of objective drug information, and form poison and drug information systems (poison and drug information centres).
- 14) They initiate and undertake research in pharmacotherapeutics (clinical trials), pharmacoepidemiology, pharmacy practice, and health economics.
- 15) They evaluate and document the results of such research for improving all the aspects of pharmaceutical care.
- 16) They educate all health care professionals involved in pharmaceutical care.
- 17) They develop, evaluate and document the pharmaceutical care practices.

- 18) They take part in health screening (such as diabetes and cholesterol). .
- 19) They contribute in health promotion and education, e.g., proper use of medication, smoking cessation, immunisation, prevention of drug abuse, hygiene, family planning, and AIDS prevention.
- 20) They establish professional standards and check the procedures.
- 21) They establish and maintain a well-qualified pharmacy workforce.