

## THE PHARMACIST'S ROLES IN SOLVING ETHICAL PROBLEMS

Malyi V.V., Bondarieva I.V., Rohulia O.Yu., Babicheva G.S., Chehrynets A.A.,  
Malinina N. G., Zhadko S.V.

National University of Pharmacy, Kharkov, Ukraine

**Annotayion.** The article examines the roles of pharmacists in solving ethical problems. The main approaches and means of solving ethical problems are highlighted, examples of solving ethical problems in pharmacies are considered.

**Key words:** *pharmacist, role, ethical problem, solution, ethical use, medicine, approach, mean, pharmacy*

**Introduction.** Pharmacists are providing access to medicines and advice on their safe and effective use. In addition to the challenges associated with pharmaceutical practice, pharmacists also face numerous ethical issues. These issues can arise in various situations, such as when making decisions about prescriptions, as pharmacists must weigh the risks and benefits of medicines, consider the individual characteristics of the patient, as well as ethical considerations such as conflicts of interest. Ethical issues also arise when counselling patients, as pharmacists must provide patients with clear and unbiased information about medications, respect their autonomous decisions, and ensure confidentiality. It is important that pharmacists have the knowledge and skills to deal with ethical issues.

The **goal** is to analyze the pharmacist's roles in solving ethical problems.

**Methods and materials.** In the process of work, we used the following research methods: descriptive, generalization, content analysis.

**Research results.** Pharmacist's knowledge, experience and ethical principles make them important players in ensuring the availability, safety and ethical use of medicines.

In 2011, according to the joint guidelines of the World Health Organization and the International Federation of Pharmacists "Good Pharmacy Practice: Quality

Standards for Pharmacy Services", the four main professional roles of pharmacists were specified:

- manufacturing, receiving, storing, ensuring safety, distributing, prescribing, utilizing and destroying medicinal products;
- provision of effective pharmacotherapy;
- maintenance and improvement of professional activity;
- promoting the efficiency of the health care system and public health.

At the same time, the first and third professional roles are directly related to the functioning of pharmacy, the second and fourth - do not have institutional pharmaceutical specifics, but are inherent to pharmacists already because they have been included in the system of other social institutions, primarily health care. It is worth noting that in the implementation of professional roles of a pharmacist, conflicts of financial and professional interests arise. Due to competition in the pharmaceutical market, which is constantly growing, the tasks of the financial and economic (commercial) rather than the medical and social component in the activity of pharmacies became a priority. This is especially actively implemented against the background of uncertainty associated with asymmetry of information, that is, uneven distribution of information about the specific properties and parameters of medicine's activity between the pharmacist and the patient [1-3].

Pharmaceutical education includes an important ethical component aimed at preparing professionals to understand ethical standards and situations that may arise in practice. Ensuring the confidentiality of medical information, respect for patient autonomy and the ability to provide objective information are key aspects of a pharmacist's ethical work. A pharmacy specialist must consider ethical aspects when choosing and recommending medicines. This includes considering possible side effects, drug interactions, and the cost and availability of medications. When participating in clinical trials, the pharmacist plays a role in ensuring the ethics and safety of the research. He acts as a defender of the interests of the participants and guarantees compliance with ethical principles. A pharmacy professional must be

able to ethically collaborate with physicians, other medical professionals, and colleagues to achieve optimal outcomes in patient care. In the process of providing medical services, a pharmacist may face conflict situations. Solving such conflicts requires ethical sensitivity, empathy and the ability to find compromise solutions. The pharmacist must avoid situations of conflict of interest, ensuring that his decisions and recommendations are based on objective criteria and are aimed at the benefit of the patient. The pharmacy professional must engage in ethical reflection on a regular basis, reviewing their actions and decisions in order to maintain high ethical standards and provide the best possible patient care [4].

All these aspects form a complex role of the pharmacist in solving ethical problems, which emphasizes the importance of ethical principles in all aspects of their professional activity. An integral part of his work is the combination of medical knowledge with a strong ethical basis to ensure safety, efficiency and human dignity in the process of providing pharmaceutical services.

Solving ethical problems in pharmacy requires a complex approach and the use of various means. Below are the *main approaches and tools* used to solve ethical dilemmas in the pharmaceutical industry:

1. Organization of trainings and seminars. Providing pharmacists with the necessary knowledge of ethical standards and principles helps prepare them to resolve complex ethical situations.
2. The development and implementation of ethical codes and standards allows creating a framework for professional behaviour in the pharmaceutical industry, which facilitates the resolution of ethical issues.
3. Creation of an internal ethics commission. Pharmaceutical companies can create internal ethics commissions that are responsible for studying and reviewing ethical situations, as well as developing recommendations.
4. Involvement of ethical experts. The use of ethics consultants can be useful to obtain expert assistance in solving specific ethical problems.

5. Development and implementation of systems. Creating internal control systems that consider ethical aspects helps to prevent and detect possible violations of ethical standards.

6. Partnership with experts and organizations. Interaction with experts in the field of ethics and medicine allows pharmacists to find objective and innovative solutions.

7. Strengthening reporting and transparency on ethical issues helps create an open environment where potential issues are addressed and resolved.

8. Promoting ethical leadership. Supporting and developing ethical leadership among pharmacists helps create an ethical culture in the organization.

9. Facilitating interaction with patients. Considering the opinion and views of patients in the process of making ethical decisions contributes to the creation of a humanized approach to problems.

10. Audit of ethical activity. Regular assessment of ethical activity allows identifying problematic points and implementing the necessary corrections [1, 3].

The application of these approaches and tools in pharmaceutical practice helps ensure a high level of ethics and responsibility in the industry, which in turn improves the quality of medical care and public trust.

Let's consider an example of solving an ethical problem in pharmacy practice. A pharmacist works in a pharmacy, who is faced with an ethical problem related to patient confidentiality. While filling a prescription, the pharmacist notices that one of his old friends has become a patient and received a prescription for a drug to treat a serious illness. The pharmacist finds himself in a situation where he must maintain the confidentiality of patients while at the same time refraining from divulging personal information about his friend.

To solve this situation, the pharmacist must adhere to ethical standards that determine the confidentiality of information. The pharmacist must refuse to provide any information regarding the treatment of his friend and ensure the confidentiality of his medical information. He can seek advice from other

specialists who will help confirm the correctness of his decision and determine the optimal course of action. Introducing a system of training on ethical issues in a pharmacy organization can help prevent similar situations in the future and define standards of behaviour. A pharmacist can use a code of ethics that clearly defines obligations to maintain confidentiality and avoid conflicts of interest.

Informing senior management about the occurrence of an ethical situation may include feedback and implementation of measures for further prevention of similar problems. In this case, the solution to the ethical problem is for the pharmacist to maintain patient confidentiality, even if it is difficult in the context of a personal relationship. This contributes to maintaining professional ethics and trust in the pharmacist as a specialist.

Another example of solving ethical problems in pharmacy is the following situation: a pharmaceutical company develops a new drug that can revolutionize cancer treatment. However, studies show that the drug has potentially serious side effects, including death. An ethical issue arises: does the potential benefit of the drug justify the risk of serious side effects. A possible solution would be to conduct additional studies to better understand the risks and benefits of the drug.

Solving ethical problems in pharmacy is a complex process that requires careful consideration of all aspects. It is important to strike a balance between risk and benefit, make the medicine available to those who need it, and ensure that patients who take it understand the risks and consent to the treatment.

### **Conclusions**

1. The roles of pharmacists in solving ethical problems were studied.
2. The main approaches and tools used to solve ethical dilemmas in the pharmaceutical industry were determined.
3. The examples of solving ethical problems in pharmacies were described.

## References

1. Carnes, N.C. How morality signals, benefits, binds, and teaches / N.C. Carnes, B. Allmon, J. Alva, K.A. Cousar, Z.D. Varnam // *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*. – 2022. – 14 p.
2. International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP). Ethics and the pharmacist: Privacy and confidentiality. The Hague: International Pharmaceutical Federation, 2023. – 24 p.
3. Konokh, A. Formation of Deontological Culture of Future Pharmacists in Higher Education Institutions of Ukraine / A. Konokh, V. Naumchuk, A. Konokh, O. Konokh, T. Shafranska // *Universal Journal of Public Health*. – 2022. – 10(4). P. 289–298.
4. Krajnovic, D. Ethical issues and values in pharmacy practice / D. Krajnovic, T. Crnjanski, S. Mirko // *Farmacia*. – 2021. – V. 69, 2. – P. 375–383.
5. Morality is Supreme: The Roles of Morality, Fairness and Group Identity in the Ultimatum Paradigm / W. Liu [et al.] // *Psychology Research and Behavior Management*. – 2022. – 2049–2065.

**Резюме.** В статті досліджено ролі фармацевтів у вирішенні етичних проблем. Виділені основні підходи та засоби в вирішенні етичних проблем, розглянуто приклади вирішення етичних проблем в аптеках.

**Ключові слова:** роль, фармацевт, етична проблема, вирішення, етичне використання, лікарський засіб, підхід, засіб, аптека