Examining the Disconnect between Education Theory and Education Practice in the Design of Pharmacy Education programmes- A Case Study from Qatar University

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Background: The Qatari Government established a College of Pharmacy in Qatar University (QU) (2006) to comply with the Qatar National Vision 2030¹. A five year BSc and one year PharmD were established. The PharmD is a one-year post BSc degree that qualifies graduates to practice advanced clinical pharmacy. The curriculum is based on international accreditation standards, best practices² and Qatar needs. While the curriculum and instruction of the BSc programme contains off campus internships, the PharmD is designed almost completely for work-based learning.

Education Theory and Education Practice: Behind educational practices lie educational philosophy and theory³. Therefore, there is a need to develop an understanding of the role education theory plays in evidence based educational practice. This study aims to examine the potential disconnect between education theories and practice in the QU PharmD programme.

Method: A Case Study approach⁴ entailing comprehensive document analysis and semi structured interviews with pharmacy education scholars, policy makers and program designers is used to examine the theory practice disconnect.

Results: Pedagogical concerns regarding the theory-practice disconnect were identified. Stakeholders argued the importance of basing pharmacy programmes on educational theory. Programme designers commonly lack knowledge about theory, and hence theory does not emerge in programme designs. Stakeholders indicated that this lack of understanding of the importance of theory is evident among faculty and preceptors, making it difficult to consistently align their teaching strategies, and hence the learning experience of the students, to the programme's educational theories.

Discussion: It is vital that designers and teachers in pharmacy programmes understand the role of educational theories in improving overall programme consistency, aligning theory and practice in areas of curriculum, instruction and assessment, to improve the student experience.

References

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