

Substance Use Disorder Education

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INTRODUCTION

Professional academic programs have historically ill-prepared health professionals, including pharmacists, to address many of the core issues related to substance use disorders (SUDs), the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, Fifth Edition (DSM-5) term for addiction or substance dependence that will impact their practice during their careers. It is not unusual to hear pharmacists who have been practicing for several decades reflect that their education about SUDs included only some basic drug class pharmacology and toxicology along with legal aspects of controlled substance management.

HISTORY OF SUD CURRICULAR DEVELOPMENT

Early Projects

A workgroup from the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy (AACP) Substance Abuse Education and Assistance Special Interest Group (SAEA SIG) initiated a project in 1988 to develop curricular guidelines for pharmacy SUD education. In 1991, Baldwin et al.^{1,2}, reviewing literature related to pharmacy SUD education in a resultant pharmacy curricular guideline report, noted that two-thirds of pharmacy faculty members in a survey conducted in the late 1980s felt their SUD education was inadequate. Pharmacy students in the southeastern United States and pharmacists who were recovering from SUDs within that approximate timeframe also reported inadequate education in these areas. The faculty members and student pharmacists preferred the expansion of SUD education within existing coursework utilizing college faculty members' expertise as well as outside speakers rather than developing freestanding required courses.

PRACTICE POINT

The pharmacy academy has historically favored integration of SUD curricular content within existing courses rather than adding a required course.



Nonetheless, in 1987, Light³ detailed a required SUD course at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences College of Pharmacy that has remained on the required curriculum for more than 30 years.

The AACP SAEA SIG workgroup identified educational goals for SUD education within pharmacy professional degree programs (summarized in **Table 10-1**).¹ The **AACP SAEA-SIG then defined the following major categorical content areas for its review and guidelines:**

- Psychosocial aspects of SUDs
- Pharmacology and toxicology of SUDs and substance misuse
- Identification, intervention, and treatment of those with SUDs
- Legal issues

The elective and required curricular contents recommended by the workgroup report within each category are summarized in **Table 10-2**.

PRACTICE POINT

SUD content-related deficiencies have typically been in psychosocial aspects of SUDs, pharmacotherapy of SUDs, and SUD identification, intervention, and treatment.



An AACP Council of Faculties committee was appointed in 1992 to survey the pharmacy academy to determine the extent of utilization of the 1991 SUD curricular guidelines.¹ The results of the committee's two-year review were published in 1994.⁴ Survey responses were received from 84% (63) of the 75 U.S. pharmacy colleges. The survey asked respondents to estimate the percentage of the recommended objectives in the pharmacy curriculum article that their college included in their required and elective curriculum in each of the four content areas defined in Table 10-2 (see **Table 10-3** for a summary of these estimates).¹