

Caribbean Network on Pharmaceutical Education

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Problem Statement

Challenges to ensure access and rational use of efficacious, quality, and safe medicines and health technologies;

CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME) includes: free movement of labour, harmonisation of social services, transfer of social security benefits, and establishment of common standards and measures for accreditation and equivalency.

Strengthening and harmonisation of pharmacy education is a priority as part of the Caribbean Pharmaceutical Policy, supported by PAHO/WHO, CARICOM and the Caribbean Association of Pharmacists (CAP).

Objective

Describe the establishment of the Caribbean Network on Pharmacy Education (CNPE)

Design, setting and Intervention

Design: A descriptive study was conducted in December 2010 about the process of establishing the network from May 2009 until December 2010.

Setting: Seven institutions with the Pharmacy Program in the Caribbean

Intervention: Identification of the existing Pharmacy programs in the Caribbean (2008), two workshops (2009, 2010), several virtual meetings using “elluminate”[®] and a telephone survey with eleven interviews (2010)

Results

Six schools offering Pharmacy Programmes identified in the English-speaking Caribbean (2008) based on key informants;

1st Workshop conducted in May 2009: Pharmacy programmes and technical advisory group on medicines of CARICOM. As result of the workshop:

- ✓ The background information and each programme were presented;
- ✓ Degrees provided: diploma, associate degree, and bachelors, with no difference in professional recognition or levels of responsibility for professional registration and practice.
- ✓ Joint collaboration was agreed and schools nominated a focal point for establishing a network.

The Network mission:

Promote strengthening and harmonization of pharmaceutical education and to contribute to strengthening of pharmaceutical policies and other initiatives for the achievement of the highest level of health in the Caribbean.

Participants:

- ✓ Pharmacy Schools in the Caribbean
- ✓ PAHO/WHO
- ✓ CARICOM Secretariat
- ✓ Caribbean Association of Pharmacists (CAP)
- ✓ Ministries of Health

Challenges and Perspectives

Main challenges

- ✓ Geographic and language barriers
- ✓ Different programmes and levels of training

What are the outcomes that should be sustained / maintained?

- ✓ Network formation
- ✓ Communication: Online meetings
- ✓ Survey completion, reporting and dissemination
- ✓ Curriculum reviews and training workshops for harmonization
- ✓ Collaboration with Pan-American Committee and other institutions such as CARICOM; Global networks (FIP, GAPE, ACPE etc);

In 2010, two schools were incorporated:

- ✓ Dominican Republic and Belize – total 8, Haiti to be considered.

Survey on Pharmacy programmes in the Caribbean (2010):

- ✓ Telephone interview with head of institutions, lecturers and students;
- ✓ main challenges and possible barriers for collaboration and harmonisation were mapped

2nd Caribbean Workshop on Pharmacy Education (May, 2010):

- ✓ Presentation and discussion of results
- ✓ Review, validation and agreement on Terms of Reference of the Caribbean Network on Pharmacy Education (CNPE)
- ✓ Network established

Network activities until Dec (2010):

- ✓ Priorities identified: (1) develop a proposal for a harmonization; (2) study of the requirements and standards for registration and the practice of pharmacists and (3) develop a proposal for addressing pharmaceutical policy issues in the pharmacy curricula.
- ✓ Working groups were established to address the priorities;
- ✓ A biennial work plan was prepared and it's progress is monitored with monthly virtual meetings where results are reported and discussed.
- ✓ Monthly virtual (elluminate) meetings.

Conclusions

The schools recognize their limited capacity and consider the network to be one alternative for improving pharmacy education both in the Caribbean and individually, with possibilities of sharing personnel and resources in the future.

Funding

Until September 2010, the activities were part of the EU/ACP/WHO Project “Partnership on Pharmaceutical Policies,” funded by European Union