Director's Forum

Incorporating Pharmacy Scholarship to Management Responsibilities

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Practice advancement demands innovation. Amidst professional change, pharmacy leaders have the opportunity to collaborate with colleagues to develop transformational ideas, implement these solutions, and share those successes with professionals around the state, country, and world. Scholarship, defined as contributing to the literature through publications, presentations, and other writings, is an ideal way to advance innovation within the profession. It is critical for pharmacy leaders to build scholarship into their professional workflow. Ensuring that successful projects are published or presented may translate into shared best practices. Many pharmacy leaders may find it difficult to participate in scholarship activities because of their busy schedules. This column serves to outline recommendations on how to effectively incorporate writing for publications, making presentations, and other scholarly work into the role of pharmacy leaders and managers. To reduce the barriers to scholarship, pharmacy leaders role can apply project management principles to their work and identify projects that otherwise would not be published and support their development.

Traditionally rooted in academia, scholarship can be defined as “the creation, advancement, or transformation of knowledge that is distributed from an individual or group to the scientific community.”¹ Another widely used definition of scholarship was introduced by Boyer, who discussed 4 distinct categories of scholarship: (1) scholarship of discovery, (2) scholarship of integration, (3) scholarship of application, and (4) scholarship of teaching.² As the types of academically acceptable areas of scholarship continue to grow, the opportunities for departments of pharmacy to support “scholarly” activity expand in kind. The literature contains a variety of principles and purported “rules” of scholarship. Glassick and colleagues³ outlined 6 standards for all forms of scholarship:

- Clear goals. Research project aims must be clear and add value to the profession.
- Adequate preparation. The scholar should understand the current nature of the field and be adequately skilled to complete the project.
- Appropriate methods. Proper procedures should be used to complete the project, including sound methods, correct application of methods, and continual modification of methods when necessary.
- Significant results. A project should be sufficiently innovative and contribute to the overall professional body of knowledge in some tangible way.
- Effective communication. Communicating the results of a project is essential, as the ultimate impact of a research project is incumbent on the clarity of its presentation and how well it is disseminated.
- Reflective critique. Areas in which to learn and improve should be identified and discussed. This will ensure the next scholarly work benefits from previous endeavors.

It is critical for pharmacy leaders to build scholarship activities into their professional workflow, ensuring that successful projects are translated into shared best practices. Due to the busy schedules of most

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pharmacy leaders, they may find it difficult to participate in scholarship activities. This article outlines recommendations on how to effectively incorporate publications, presentations, and other scholarly activities into the role of pharmacy leaders and managers.

SCHOLARSHIP VERSUS RESEARCH

Often there is debate as to what constitutes research and scholarship.⁴ To meet the challenges of today's health care environment, scholarship must include not only large-scale multisite projects, but also smaller initiatives designed to improve understanding of local, institution-based, practice issues. This type of evidence cannot be delineated without active participation from those in "real-world" practice environments. A culture of innovation and academic dissemination of best practice must be created beyond the walls of our schools, colleges, and universities. There are some guiding points for pharmacy leaders to consider as they undertake these types of activities⁴:

- Research is not just for traditional academics.
- Impactful research often occurs at the front line.
- Research findings can impact all sectors of the pharmacy profession.
- A culture change is often needed to ensure pharmacy departments build scholarship into daily practice.
- Practice research is vital to respond to changing health care needs, marketplace competition, and an increasing focus on patient safety and quality of care.
- Pharmacists will need collaboration and support to be successful.

Involvement in research and scholarship can take many forms for pharmacy leaders today. A common misconception is that "research," as a broad term, only includes large, multisite, multiarm, multiyear, and extensively funded studies. However, the reality is that there are many opportunities for front-line pharmacists and pharmacy managers to participate in scholarship and these opportunities are growing.⁴ These activities include (1) scholarship on collected data for multidisciplinary collaborations or with college of pharmacy faculty; (2) publishing novel data as part of an institution-wide study; (3) identification of internal department issues and design of a quality improvement project that leads to a publication or presentation; (4) publishing an analysis of current services gaps and provision of expanded pharmacy services; and (5) publishing a collaboration between departments of pharmacy and local health departments.

Scholarship can be disseminated in a variety of ways. Traditionally, non-biased peer-reviewed publication of articles has been the preferred manner by which to present academic work. Other options include platform presentations, poster presentations, abstracts, commentary, case reports, and even blog entries.

WAYS TO INTEGRATE SCHOLARSHIP INTO MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

Create a "Scholarly" Culture

Although initially it can be somewhat intimidating, active participation in scholarly work as a pharmacy manager is vital to personal and professional growth. Success requires a commitment of time, energy, and mind. When surveyed, pharmacy practice faculty members averaged approximately 0.5 total articles per faculty member per year.⁵ Even individuals who have scholarly activity included as a portion of their job description may find it difficult to get articles published. Before the ink is dry on the first word of a scholarly piece, an effective leader must purposefully work toward creating an atmosphere that supports scholarship and includes research as a departmental expectation. This is even more critical for persons who are working outside of an academic or teaching environment.

Figure 1 shows how a pharmacy leader's current work supports scholarly activity.⁶ This figure, adapted from Diamond's *Defining Scholarship in the Twenty-First Century*, demonstrates the relatively large proportion of total manager activity that can support scholarly output. Of all the job functions under the purview of a pharmacy manager, a significant portion are project-based. In this share, there is a large subsection of opportunities to integrate scholarship into daily work. The proportion of activities is different for every manager; yet, the goal should be to maximize the opportunity for scholarship, aiming to fill as much of the project-based workspace as is reasonably possible with these activities. To accomplish this, the pharmacy manager must thoughtfully integrate this type of work into traditional administrative practice. This begins with the creation of a department-wide expectation that research and subsequent delivery of the results is a priority within the organization. Each individual from direct reports to supervisors must be made aware of the organization's desire to actively pursue scholarship. Then, expectations can be formalized and managed appropriately.

Creating a climate of mentoring and collaboration can enhance an organization's scholarship

Figure 1. Integrating scholarship into daily work.⁶

productivity level. Encouraging practice-based clinical or managerial research opportunities among staff and postgraduate learners will develop a culture of academic exploration, innovation, and improvement. This type of environment should be established by pharmacy leadership and should be regularly assessed, refined, and re-enforced. Components of a healthy scholarly pharmacy environment include formal mentoring programs between academic leaders and front-line staff, participation in research-focused professional development programs, formal partnerships between clinical departments and academic units (ie, schools/colleges of pharmacy or medicine), and postgraduate training programs that support clinical, administrative, and academic development.⁷

Develop a Plan for Scholarship

The principles of project management can be linked to the development of a department's plan for increasing scholarly activity. Accomplishing any task, particularly one involving multiple stakeholders, is always easier when a standardized approach is used. A strong advocate of standardization and

project management, the Project Management Institute, uses a standard guide to assist in project management activities (PMBOK Guide).⁸⁻¹⁰ This 6-step guide is often used by project managers to achieve successful completion of any project: initiate, plan, execute, monitor, control, and close.

- **Initiate.** Project objectives are established, scope is defined, and responsible parties and deliverables are identified. A project charter is often useful to document this step; be sure everything is documented and a charter is written down.
- **Plan.** Project objectives are defined and refined. A specific course of action is outlined and documented.
- **Execute.** Planning leads to executing. People and other resources are coordinated to carry out the overall project plan.
- **Monitor.** Projects are monitored regularly to determine whether objectives are being met. Control boards and process audits are often used in this step.
- **Control.** Corrective action can be taken if a problem arises in the monitoring step to ensure that the project stays on track.
- **Close.** The project is successfully completed. The project team reviews lessons learned and opportunities for future projects are discussed.

Standardized project management practices can help achieve successful completion of projects and will support subsequent scholarly activity, provided that the resulting information includes a clear plan, thoughtful execution, useful results, and opportunities for publication, presentation, or other academic diffusion.⁹

By recognizing similarities in the steps used in project management and scholarship, pharmacy managers can effectively integrate scholarship activities in daily work. **Table 1** shows some of the

Table 1. Linking scholarship to project management

PDSA	PMBOK ^a	Glassick et al	Scholarship steps ^a
	Initiation	Clear Goals	Conception
Plan	Planning	Adequate Preparation	Planning
Do	Executing	Appropriate Methods	Drafting
Study/Check	Monitoring	Significant Results	Feedback
Act	Controlling	Effective Communication	Re-drafting
	Closing	Reflection	Submission

Note: PDSA = plan, do, study, act.

^aIndividual projects, including scholarly activities, are temporary, so PMBOK and Scholarship require initiation and closing steps.

similarities between scholarship and managing projects. In addition to the PMBOK Guide and the Glassick analysis, the quality improvement steps of plan, do, study, and act (PDSA) correlate to the scholarship steps.^{10,11} Once this alignment is understood, it becomes standard practice to use these scholarship steps to build scholarly work directly into projects, subsequently sculpting projects into publications naturally.

Address Barriers to Scholarship

Despite their best efforts to form a culture and an accompanying plan to support scholarship, managers will face barriers to success. Fortunately, there are also effective strategies to minimize and overcome these obstacles. A pharmacy leadership team may consider launching a survey to objectively assess the department's current perceptions and readiness for scholarship undertakings; by doing so, the team can identify specific barriers and target mitigation strategies.

A study by Morris and colleagues helped identify factors most associated with the publication of scholarly articles. Factors that facilitate publication include adequate time allotment, mentorship programs, positive work culture, collaboration, and formal training programs in research and writing. Further, fellowship and graduate school programs were found to be influential in developing academic skills and abilities.¹²

Barriers to effective publication include lack of time and lack of collaboration within a specific department or research team. Additionally, a lack of confidence in both research and writing ability tends to decrease a person's likelihood of involvement in scholarly pursuits. Other identified barriers were a lack of knowledge about the publication process itself, perceived lack of resources and incentives, and limited encouragement by leadership.¹²

A pharmacy manager will most likely have limited time to focus on scholarly activities. Integrating scholarship into project management processes is an efficient use of time and resources, yet managers still may not feel confident about developing ongoing departmental quality or clinical projects into research. Leaders should seek opportunities to work collaboratively with persons who may be more experienced or have a strong desire to lead the project and partner with other pharmacists, physicians, nurses, or those in more traditional academic settings. Working with those who are more knowledgeable will ensure the

research is done correctly, and will enable the scholarship novice to gain experience in these activities.¹³ Pharmacy managers are also encouraged to build on existing research skills through reading, attending professional conferences focused on scholarship, and practicing mentorship. Additional tactics are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. Tactics to reduce barriers to scholarship

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support student and postgraduate training programs. Typically, learners will have requirements for research as part of their training program.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Schedule writing sessions. Scholarly managers create writing time where none exists and consider this designated time sacred. Using an outlook calendar to schedule time is an effective approach.¹⁴
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Write quickly, but edit slowly; separate writing from editing. Limited time will be available to write your manuscript or presentation, so maximize your efforts by first writing and then reviewing what you have written. Organize the final product by saving the good parts and excising the bad.¹⁴
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use project management techniques. Information from the project charter created when using the PMBOK, PDSA (Plan, Do, Study, Act), or similar project management tools can help you to craft the framework of your article, abstract, or presentation. This framework is a great outline and initiation point.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Seek feedback from trustworthy colleagues. Identify individuals who will read your work in a timely manner and provide honest and open feedback.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read about writing. Spend some professional development time reading up about scholarship. Just as you would learn about finance, strategic planning, or human resources, scholarship is a discipline that benefits from expanded knowledge.¹⁴
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Practice makes perfect. Continue to seek out opportunities to collaborate and learn from others who have become scholarly "masters."
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Refer to professional organizations for resources related to research and scholarship development. The American Society of Health-System Pharmacists, American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy, and the American Pharmacists Association have Web resources and toolkits.

CONCLUSION

Effective and sustained scholarship should be included in both a department and an individual's development plan. Pharmacy managers should not be intimidated by scholarship, but instead should lead the development of a culture of scholarly activity. Scholarship can emerge out of the most basic of project achievements; integrating scholarship steps into project management will simplify the process and expedite results. To be successful, however, a personal commitment must be made, including 360-degree support. Your supervisor, along with your direct reports, should assist with your strategic plan, fully endorsing a department's commitment to innovation and discovery. Ultimately, these collaborations and the resulting scholarship will advance the profession and benefit the patients we serve.

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