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Light

News Letter

## Higher Education Skill Development and Research Center

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### 1. Obituary



**Kalpesh V. Mehta (48)**, Co-founder HESDARC, Mysuru, a resident of Vontikoppal, passed away on 16 December 2024, following a heart attack at a private hospital in city. He leaves behind his parents, wife, two daughters and a host of relatives and friends. Mr Kalpesh was very soft-spoken individual with excellent HR skills with very good domain knowledge.

Kalpesh was the senior advisor for HESDARC M and contributed immensely to its development since its inception in 2017. Kalpesh contributed immensely in the training programs/ FDPs and transformation of institutions.

HESDARC M salutes Kalpesh and prays for the well-being of the family

### 2. Editorial

**Hello esteemed readers,**

Let the new year bestow on us more wisdom to differentiate good and bad, more courage to take calculated risks for professional development and more positive attitude to withstand negativity around

We are happy to forward the 29th Issue of HESDARC newsletter "BELAKU" or "LIGHT" for the 8th year continuously, communicating new seeds of thought for higher education development.

This issue contains the results of survey after about 2 years implementation of modified UG curriculum at Amrita University Kochi. the results

are in this issue and encouraging to say the list. Concerned students have appreciated the positive, constructive and most needed change after many years

There is also an invited article by Dr Bupendra Shah, Touro College of Pharmacy, Touro University, New York USA on "Colleges of Pharmacy as Champions of Student Success and Agents of Change for the Pharmacy Profession". Dr Shah discusses about Zero-Based Curriculum Review and other aspects related.

Please read on

### 3. Survey on the impact and usefulness of the modified UG curriculum at the School of Pharmacy, Amritha University Kochi, Kerala

*Survey conducted by HESDARC Mysuru in November 2024*

#### Need for the survey

1. To measure the awareness about the modified UG (B Pharm) curriculum amongst the students concerned especially of the 2023-24 and 2024-25 batch of students
2. Quantify their knowledge and understanding about the modified UG program
3. Facilitate the necessary changes in the curriculum after the survey to meet the learner needs in a professional manner
4. Get the students qualitative and brief response to few open ended questions

#### Specific objectives of the survey

1. Design the survey questionnaire and validate with experts of HESDARC and faculties of the Amrita School of Pharmacy
2. Analyse the data collected and measure the impact on the learners with specific questions and pie

diagram

- Quantitatively measure the impact and usefulness of the modified curriculum
- Summarize the impact and usefulness of the modified curriculum and regulation
- Communicate the same to the stake holders and others at large
- Motivate more deemed and private universities to systematically modify the curriculum to meet the needs of students, profession, NEP 2020 and future requirements of the society

**Summary of the survey**

- HESDARC conducted a survey on the students with the help of principal and faculties of year 1 and 2 B Pharm in Nov 2024
- The modified UG regulation and curriculum is offered from the academic year 2023-24 and about 3 or 4 semesters are completed
- Created a separate google classroom of the concerned

Students, about 100, before collecting feedback on Google Classroom.

- All the students were informed about the purpose and process of the survey in advance.
- Collected data was analyzed for impact and usefulness
- The data was shared with stakeholders and the institution in Dec 2024.

- It will be presented as a joint poster at national or international conference and if possible published as a short or long paper in journal later if possible
- Modified regulation and curriculum have positive impact on the students learning
- Students have found their learning to be effective and useful due to constructive changes in the UG curriculum
- Cultural and life skills courses are found useful by majority of the learners

- Increase in the weightage for the formative assessment has been appreciated by the learners
- Addition of MCQ's, Assignments and Quiz to each course is useful for the continuous motivation and learning by the students

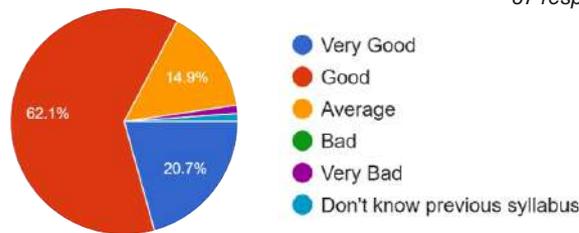
**Few specific comments by students**

- It improves critical thinking and professional competency.
- Earlier curriculum was more theory based or lecture oriented, but the revised curriculum is more skill oriented.
- I think it is more organised than the previous curriculum:
- Yes. It helped me to study in more joyful way.
- Reduced burden of covering whole syllabus towards end of semester.
- Sometimes feels stressful but it's okay, it's a professional course

**Pie Diagrams with specific MCQ:**

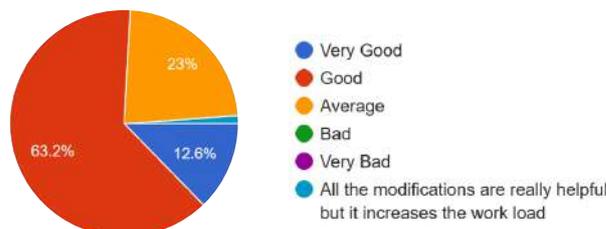
1. How does the modified B Pharm regulation and curriculum impact your learning compared to earlier syllabus?

87 responses



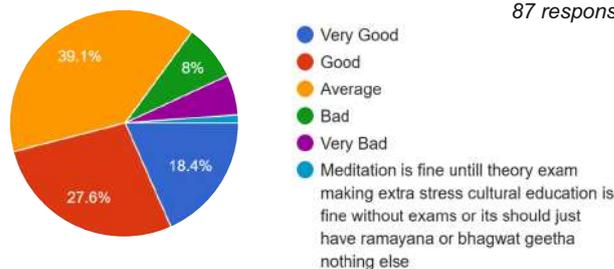
2. Scope of all courses have been modified, program and course outcomes re-defined as per Bloom's Taxonomy. Are they useful and help you in learning?

87 responses



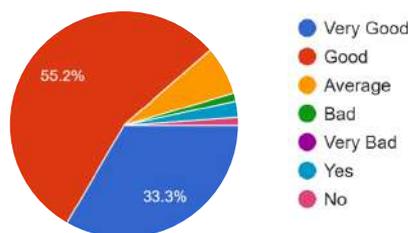
3. Cultural education courses: meditation course in semester 1 is added. Is it helpful?

87 responses



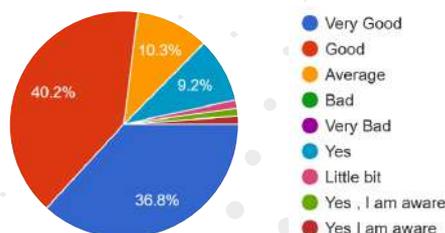
4. The order of the courses has been modified to balance credits for each semester. Are the changes useful?

87 responses



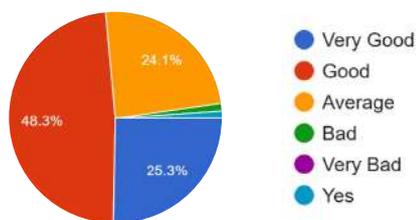
5. Total credits of the B pharm program optimized to national and international standards and overlaps have been minimized. Are you aware of this change?

87 responses



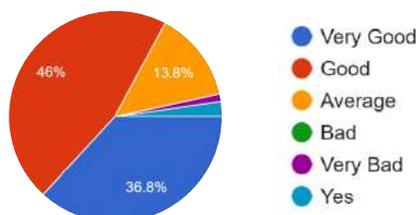
6. Weightage of continuous assessment for all courses increased. Is it helpful for your learning and consolidation of concepts?

87 responses



7. Multiple choice questions, Quiz, Assignments added to each course internal assessment in addition to sessional. Are the new assessment tool...s useful and motivating you to learn continuously?

87 responses



Thank you: Amrita University authorities; Dr Sabitha, Principal- Amrita School of Pharmacy; Faculties Dr Rahul Soman and Dr Laksmi PK; Students of year 1 and 2 B Pharm; Senior consultants at HESDARC, Mysuru

#### 4. Colleges of Pharmacy as Champions of Student Success and Agents of Change for the Pharmacy Profession



##### Bupendra K Shah

BS Pharm, MS, PhD, Associate Dean of Assessment, Associate Professor, Social Behavioural and Administrative Sciences, Director, Center for Pharmacy Education and Pharmacist Care Services; Touro College of Pharmacy, Touro University, New York USA; bupendra.shah4@touro.edu

In this essay, I make a few observations, ask questions and provide recommendations that are borne out of my 17 years experiences in USA, expertise and from what I believe is the current and, in the future, should be the landscape for pharmacists in India.

##### Let's start with a few questions:

- What is it that BPharm graduates should be able to do? How is it separated from the Diploma in Pharmacy graduates, graduates from the PharmD program and graduates from the MPharm and PhD program?
- What knowledge, skills and attitudes should graduate at all these levels possess? While it is perfectly reasonable to say that they should be

different at different levels, have we clearly identified them?

- How are pharmacy graduates contributing to the Indian healthcare system? While in the US health care context, an entry level graduate is expected to engage in patient care activities as a medication related services provider and make a difference in patient lives, it is incumbent on Indian pharmacy academia and policy makers to provide clarity and define the role a pharmacist graduates is expected to play. Questions connected to this aspect are:
  - Is an entry level pharmacy graduate expected to be an entrepreneur who operates a drugstore?
  - Or are they expected to pursue higher education (MS/PhD/PharmD) in the country or elsewhere (like North America or Australia)?
  - Are they expected to engage in pharmaceutical detailing?

A central theme across all these questions is that pharmacy academia and a College of Pharmacy should be asking themselves is whether they and most vitally whether their curriculum and program is preparing students for these roles, skills and opportunities. This central theme can then be paired with other critical questions for the profession and the academy: How do programs know what their graduates are doing after graduation and whether the curriculum and program prepared them for it.

Why should a potential student enrol in the program and potentially consider the BPharm program over other programs? These are all very important questions that pharmacy programs need to consider and address.

Since I have posed tough questions, it is also important for me to draw the reader's attention to some steps they could consider taking to develop such outcomes-based programs. While not comprehensive, these steps can help illustrate the thoughtful process required to design an outcomes-based program.

A first step would be to engage in a systematic review and change process (Diamond 1989) such as the Zero-Based Curriculum Review (Paulsen & Peseau 1992). ZBCR is often initiated by program administration, faculty and a group of members (such as advisory board if the College has one or an alumni network, often headed by individuals who have the abilities to think critically, organize data collecting needed during the process and develop consensus among the heterogeneous perspectives brought to the table). These stakeholders will engage in creating a program specific framework of basic knowledge, competencies, experiences and skills which graduates at different levels should have.

For example, the mission, vision and philosophy of a program located in a pharmaceutical industry region might be to develop pharmacists skilled in performing

quality assurance functions and so such a program may include more quality assurance related laboratory activities and documentation training in its curriculum whereas a program whose vision, mission and objectives that are focused on providing graduates engaged in direct patient care might design a curriculum that is tailored to processing prescriptions and providing prescription review and counseling services. ZBCR allows programs to identify and tailor themselves for their unique needs and stakeholder priorities. ZBCR also helps programs move from accidental and only content driven teaching and learning curricular and program design to an intentional, planned and structured way of delivering a fulfilling educational experience for students. While it is definitely resource intensive, programs that engage in ZBCR find that student success is much higher and program contributions to its stakeholders and stakeholder satisfaction is much higher than conventional approach to program development.

A second and vital step would be for programs to engage in faculty development in the areas of outcomes-based curriculum development. ZBCR cannot be successful only by creating an outcome-based curriculum. It requires skilled faculty and staff that have the requisite confidence, knowledge and skills they are expected to impart to the students. This is an area where external stakeholders such as professional organizations, consulting groups, or individuals who are considered experts can be invited and engage faculty in workshops or active engagement activities. Next, it is very important to put into place structural elements that can engage in ongoing review of the outcomes of these efforts. Programs should create units within their colleges such as curriculum and assessment committees that can regularly meet and provide oversight, engage in discussions and environment scanning to ensure that the curriculum and program is continuously updated via a CQI process.

ZBCR highly emphasizes that curricula cannot be static and that changes should happen based on the outcomes achieved. This means that programs will need both micro-level (example: exam results data tagged to skills tested) and macro-level (example: data about employment after graduation, data from employers etc) data along with capabilities to collect them, analyze them and report them in a manner that is meaningful and useful to the stakeholders. Thus, a critical element would be to establish an assessment system or office that develops an assessment plan that integrates assessment of program effectiveness, curriculum effectiveness, teaching effectiveness and effectiveness of student services that all contribute towards achievement of outcomes not just learning

outcomes but also outcomes that the program identified during the ZBCR. Using technology and applications that are catered to such needs in a systematic manner becomes important. Such a system feeds data and results to each relevant unit such as admissions office, curriculum committee, office of alumni etc and the units then focus on using the results to make informed changes. Strategic use of data related to academic structures, processes and outcomes data becomes a core aspect of ZBCR. Again, as I referenced above, these initiatives are resource intensive but considered worthy of investment because of the results it produces.

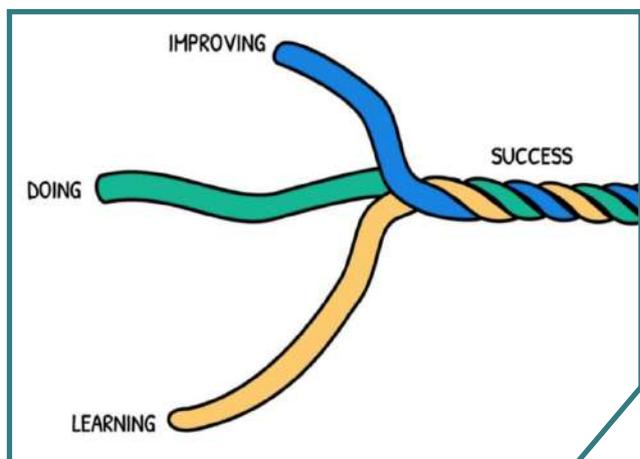
A final recommendation I would make is for colleges of pharmacies, their faculty, students and university to become champions of their profession and engage routinely with local residents, key policy authorities at the local, regional and national level to communicate the difference they are able to make in the health care system and use that opportunity of engagement to make a case for expanded roles and responsibilities for pharmacists..

Overall, via this brief and succinct commentary, I have laid out some tough questions and a potential approach and steps that pharmacy programs can utilize to advance the pharmacy profession and, in the process, become champions of student success and agents of change for the profession. I will look forward to opportunities for making meaningful engagement and contributions to my chosen profession in my mother country.

#### References:

- Diamond, R. M. (1989). Designing and Improving Courses and Curricula in Higher Education: A Systematic Approach. Jossey-Bass Inc., Publishers, 350 Sansome St., San Francisco, CA 94104-1310.*
- Paulsen, M. B., & Peseau, B. A. (1992). A practical guide to zero-based curriculum review. Innovative Higher Education, 16, 211-22*

#### 5. Quote for the Quarter



# HAPPY NEW YEAR 2025

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