

APS-Japan Activity Report

Name (Eri Kitamura)

【Field Trip to Fukushima Pharmacy in Kansai】

【Back Ground】

The history of “separation of medical and dispensary practice” in Japan is not so long. The beginning of Meiji period, German doctors introduce this idea to Japanese government, after that government made rules including pharmaceutical jurisprudence.

There were many big problems to promote “separation of medical and dispensary practice”, however, fortunately, efforts paid off, after 1997, the rate of separation of medical and dispensary practice has increased. The rate was end in 68.7 percent in 2014. However, many community pharmacies stand in a row around hospitals, there were not so big differences from the old times. Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (MHLW) set up the goal that community pharmacy will play a role as a family pharmacy until 2035, If this dream will come true, community pharmacy will be the first access of medication.

Now, we, pharmacy students, have to think about the future community pharmacy in Japan.

Reference Materials:

Japan Pharmaceutical Association : <http://www.nichiyaku.or.jp/index.html>

http://www.mhlw.go.jp/file/04-Houdouhappyou-11121000-Iyakushokuhinkyoku-Soumuka/vision_1.pdf

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【The Aim】

In the near future, it is said that community pharmacies are going to be the first access point to local patients. In this event, we learned and felt the reality of the pharmaceutical field by observing pharmacies by our own eyes. Then we discussed about what kind of action we should take for future community pharmacies.

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【Schedule】

11:00~12:30 Observing a community pharmacy

12:30~13:00 Lunch

13:00~16:30 Discussion

【Details】

What we learnt

<Observing a community pharmacy>

・Cooperating with aged care facility

Everyone knows that we should deliver medicine to aged care facilities. So, in addition to this, as healthcare providers, and as experts about medicine, pharmacists go to each patient's bedside, think about each of them, and check their vital signs. The pharmacy we went to say that they decline offers from facilities that want them to just deliver medicine.

・Cooperating with hospitals as nearby community pharmacies

Pharmacists working at hospitals and pharmacists working at community pharmacy communicate smoothly already. Community pharmacies ask hospitals to share patient information and regimens of chemotherapy from the hospitals and do medication. Not only do they follow instructions from the hospitals, but also they carry out feedback to the hospitals. The information shared also includes the whether the announcement of the cancer should be made or not, whether pharmacists should tell patients the name of the disease, or just say "This is a drug that enhances immunity." "This is a drug that activates the brain." Patient feelings have to be considered as well. Studying about drugs every day is vital as a pharmacist since technology is developing every day and new drugs come out in the market one after another. In particular, the usage of anti-cancer agent changes volatily. Pharmacists must be sensitive to such information, so they have opened study sessions with such people as medical representatives.

・How to prevent accidental ingestion

When packaging several doses in one, it is difficult to distinguish drugs that have the same color, dosage, size, and the manufacturer. In order to tell the difference between each drug, pharmacies choose drugs that have the name printed on it, or choose drugs from different manufacturers. Some drugs have information on the back of the PTP sheet about when and how to use it.

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- Hospitality when counseling

Private information flies over while counseling, so counseling is done in an area with a division. There are words that patients do not want to say out loud such as 'pregnancy', so there are pictures for the patients to point at.

- Managing drug history

To avoid concealment and flow, passwords are set in order to log in. There is a system that tells pharmacists if the drugs dispensed are contraindications for co-administration, but the system does not alert about what is not dispensable to a particular disease, so pharmacists have to have the knowledge. Drug history is written right after dispensing in principle. There are times when pharmacists contact patients by phone.

<Discussion>

- What shall we do for patients to choose us to be their primary care pharmacy?

Patients come not only for medicine, but also to become healthy. Pharmacists have to keep that in mind as professionals about drugs and have to be conscious about each patient's health and their life. In order to do that, pharmacists and patients have to be able to see each other's faces.

- "Dispensing is the main focus now, but that kind of age is almost over. Technicians are going to be introduced as the new system. What shall pharmacists do as professionals?"

"Dispensing without license = People with no license dispense with no pharmacists involving." Pharmacists don't admit that.

What is now one of the main topics discussed between pharmacists is the definition of "dispensing". It is actually not clear. The most significant point is "Who is going to be responsible for dispensing." Why was the drug history not written? According to the law, doctors must write the medical record. Doctors are conscious about writing down what kind of symptoms and what kind of diseases the patients diagnosed had because they think that if they do not, the patient might be in a very serious incident. Pharmacists write the drug history to keeping patients in mind. As professionals about drugs, pharmacists assess patient's condition. If pharmacists become conscious about that, writing the drug history would become a matter of course. "Pfercos is in a close relationship with Suzuken, a wholesales company. What kind of characteristics will Pfercos have?" Pfercos does not care about only having its own benefit. Pfercos always keep in mind about raising the quality of Japan's community pharmacy. In order to do that, Pfercos supplies everything the community demands, which includes its company's own skill and the employee's time and wisdom, then hopes for being able to contribute to raising Japan's medical quality level. Generally, those kinds of skills and information disclosing will lower the company's benefit, and the stockholders won't admit that.

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However, Pfercos's stockholder (which is Suzuken) don't think that Pfercos's "social contribution" won't lower the benefit. It's because Pfercos's social contribution will raise the other community pharmacy's quality by expanding their business. This will make Suzuken, the wholesale company's achievement go forward.

- "How do pharmacists cope with people who resist generic medicine?"

Pharmacists start with asking people why they resist. Japanese people have a cooperative spirit by nature, so by using generic medicine, we can cut back the medical bill, and save the money for patients who have serious disease such as malignant diseases. If people can think that way, generic may become widespread in our nation and people would become less resistant.

- Cooperating with chain drug stores and community pharmacies (dispensing pharmacies) in the near future

"Drug stores can be the places to play a role in preventive medicine for the community's life. By opening many stores in the community and by Omni-Channel Retaining, Fukushima Pharmacy might be able to grasp the community's life. With the new social security number, supplying information about medicine can be used as big data, but when managing patient's medicine, community pharmacies and drug stores may fight for which ever will take part in that. What does Fukushima Pharmacy think about that?

The mission of companies is to survive, so companies think about many ways for that. That is reasonable, but the problem is the way to get benefit in order to survive. Drug stores can grasp the selection of products, price, and demand. However, not writing down the drug history because of the company not paying for overwork and introducing point card in a society where all citizens have to pay the same amount of the percentage of the medical bill is too deviated. Pharmacies ignoring the essential work, mission, and system should not be engaging in guaranteeing citizen's health.

- "What do dispensing pharmacies want from the perspective of healthcare not to have any kinds of illness?"

Pharmacies have to be the first access for counseling. Not only dispensing, but also spreading our visions from what we learned to our lives, standing in the patients' shoes, and being able to do patient counseling is the ideal pharmacy.

Preventive medicine, OTC, and herbal medicine can be the field where pharmacists can show their ability.

【Comment】

- Yuya Kitazawa, Junior from Tokyo University of Pharmacy and Life Sciences

I knew only the word “Yaku-yaku renkei,” pharmacy-pharmacy cooperation, if you translate directly into English. “Yaku-yaku renkei” means that hospital pharmacists and community pharmacists cooperate with each other, for example, information sharing. But only from that idea, I thought that pharmacists just imagine each patient’s background from counseling and from their prescription, which seem to have limited information. However, after this field trip, I got to know that hospitals give notes for pharmacists in community pharmacy, and give each other a feedback from the pharmaceutical viewpoint. That is how pharmacists grasp patients’ background and cooperate with other pharmacists.

During the discussion, I got to realize that pharmacists have the knowledge of chemistry, which can be used in daily life. In the society with highly improved technology, we tend to think about working with advanced things, pharmacists are the medical providers who are closest to the people inside the community, and because of it’s easy to talk to pharmacists, I thought that it’s our job to support the community’s health and life.

From prevention to complete cure, medication is always close to man’s life. So, in many steps, pharmacists should use their skills, which would improve pharmacists’ ability for work in the future. If pharmacies mix well in the community’s life, it can be functioned as a family pharmacy as a result.

Moreover, because of such things as unlicensed dispensation, selling medical products on the internet, and automatic dispensing, some people say that pharmacists are unnecessary. However, after hearing that if pharmacists were conscious about writing drug history for considering patients, and as professionals about medicine who assesses patients health, writing the drug history would be ordinary. Now I can say that pharmacists are necessary.

I would like to keep looking from other pharmacy’s point of view, plus learn about pharmacy and medicine. With that in mind, I will think about what kind of job I will have and what I can do for patients.

- Yugo Koike, Junior of Ritsumeikan University

Whenever I read books or articles, most of them say that pharmacies aren’t putting pharmacists’ knowledge to immediate account at the moment, but after seeing the reality at this field trip, the image of community pharmacy changed. The relationship between community pharmacies and hospitals, vital checkup at nursing homes, and other things that do not relate so much to dispensing was done by pharmacists too.

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Also, having a discussion with pharmacists and other students on their own point of view was a great experience for me.

➤ Kyoichi Miyagi, Sophomore of Kobe Gakuin University

I got to see how pharmacists really work and have a discussion with pharmacists, students, and Mr. Shimada, the president of Pfercos. There were so many things to learn. I would like to turn this experience into my advantage in the future and at that time I hope I can be a reliable pharmacist from the patient's point of view. What's more, I hope I can be a pharmacist who can change the system of dispensing in a good way as well.

➤ Shogo Okamoto, Sophomore of Osaka Otani University

Even though I had a field trip with a similar concept before, this community pharmacy was completely different from the former one, so everything seemed new to me. Maybe because I am still in my second year, I didn't know much about community pharmacies. I thought that the relationship between community pharmacies and hospitals depend of the society, but like what Pfercos does, delivering medicine to community pharmacies around and sharing information for the hospital and for the patients, I was surprised to know some of the ingenuity. This was the first time for me to see the regimens, and this was a good experience as well.

However, what I thought after the discussion was that even though we have a medicine handbook (a handbook to stick or write down information about what kind of medicine the patient had in order to prevent double administration and know incompatible drugs), Japanese community pharmacies do not share information from hospitals and other community pharmacies, so asking about medicine that the patients took in the past is very difficult. This seems to be an issue in the past and even now.

The president of this company, Mr. Shimada and other pharmacists gave us a very good explanation. It was surprising that questioning time heated so much, everyone forgot about the time. I felt that this was a very fruitful time.

【pictures】

