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Essential changes in the Doctor of Pharmacy (Pharm-D) curriculum in Pakistan: an exploratory qualitative study

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Abstract Objectives The study aims to present recommendations for a revised Doctor of Pharmacy (Pharm-D) curriculum that aligns with regional needs and international standards of pharmacy education.Design An exploratory qualitative study involving individual semistructured interviews. Data were collected and reported in accordance with Consolidated Criteria for Reporting of Qualitative Studies.Setting Face-to-face interviews were conducted in the respective offices of the experts and online interviews were conducted on Zoom and Google Meet.Participants Purposive and snowball sampling was used to recruit experts due to the eligibility criteria of including associate professors with a PhD, and snowball sampling facilitated the recruitment of experts from all provinces and internationally. Interviews were transcribed verbatim and data were analysed using an inductive thematic approach using NVivo V.15. All interviews were conducted in English.Results The study engaged 49 experts from national and international settings with an age range of 25-60 years (median=43 years). The researchers came out with six themes and their subthemes from the data including: (a) understanding current Pharm-D curriculum in Pakistan, (b) inevitable changes required in the Pharm-D curriculum, (c) specific-subject based changes, (d) foundational steps to achieve the required changes, (e) barriers to the implementation of these changes and (f) impact of Pharm-D curriculum change.Conclusion The findings highlighted a clear need to revise the curriculum by incorporating enhanced clinical pharmacy content, integrated learning approaches, elective courses, interprofessional education, mandatory hospital and clinical placements, experiential learning through simulation-based methods and research components through a collaborative approach from policy makers and academic stakeholders.

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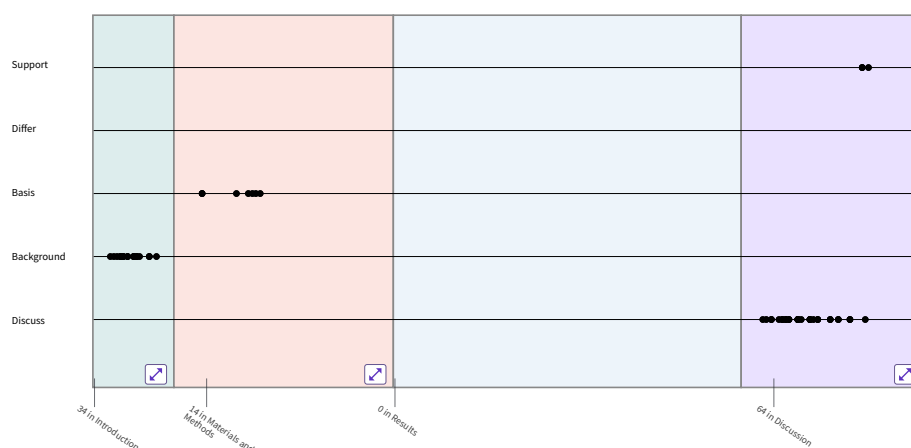
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