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Assurance of European quality standards of Ukraine’s higher pharmaceutical education at the institutional level

Today’s modern pharmaceutical education of Ukraine is characterized by dynamic development due to high competition among leading manufacturers of medical supplies and medicines.

In this context, the experience of European Union countries, particularly as for implementing customer service standards, raising social responsibility for the quality of health care services, complying with the pharmacist’s ethics in marketing, and communicating with people who need experts’ advice is considered to be one of the most important questions [1].

The national strategy of Higher Pharmaceutical Education (HPE) development in Ukraine embodies the idea of integration into the European Education Area, where the quality of education is a crucial determinant of its recognition and competitiveness. This is evidenced by at least the fact that in the UNESCO program document “Higher Education
Reforms and Development” (1995), the quality of education is defined as a leading slogan of UNO activity in the field of education [2]. Therefore, the relevance of investigating the problem of implementing the European quality standards in domestic HPE is conditioned by the expediency of clarifying the peculiarities of its solution at both the international, national, and institutional levels. As Ukraine’s HPE is focused on intensifying the processes of academic autonomy, competition, deregulation, strengthening of public control over the activity of educational institutions, the features of assuring the European quality standards for the HPE at the institutional level are to be outlined.

The works of such scientists as A. Kaidalov and O. Posylkina, which determine the topical aspects of improving the quality system in education [3], are theoretically significant for the study of the problems touching upon the assurance of the European quality standards of Ukraine’s HPE at the institutional level. The research of K. Dynnik, K. Proskurina, O. Yevtifeeva, who analyzed the results of future pharmacists’ knowledge assessment on analytical chemistry, has a practical interest for us [4]. The authors of the article have studied the issues of future pharmacists’ professional training quality [5].

It should be mentioned that the Law of Ukraine “On Higher Education” defines the essence of the concept of “quality of higher education” as a level of knowledge, skills, other competencies acquired by a person, which reflect his/her competence by the Higher Education Standards [6]. Higher education quality is a key concept of the Bologna Process. To provide it with the European Higher Education Area Qualifications Framework (2005), European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education Area (2005) were developed; the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (2004) and the European Register for Quality Assurance in Higher Education were established (2008) [7].

The analysis of the scientists’ opinions on the research problems revealed that the quality of education is a certain set of system-social characteristics that determine the compliance of the education system with the requirements of social norms and educational standards in the state and society. Therefore, obtaining a quality education directly depends on the quality of the requirements (goals, regulations and standards), the quality of resources (programs, human resources, entrants, resource- and-technical support of an educational process, finance, etc.), and the quality of educational processes (scientific and educational activities,
management, educational technology, etc.) that create the educational environment assuring a certain level of training of specialists in the higher education system [8].

To solve the problems of the research we should point out that the end of the XX - beginning of the XXI century was marked by the emergence of interest of scientists and practitioners of Europe in the issues of quality assurance in higher education. This is explained by the transition of most national education systems in European countries to a methodology design of learning outcomes-oriented education and its monitoring, the impact on this process made by some objective reasons, namely: the gradual removal of the state from active intervention and regulation of higher education in many European countries by replacing the quality control procedures of education with those which assured it. We agree with the scientists [9, 10] who recognize the deterministic nature of these factors in the political development of European countries: the dominance of neoliberalism, accompanied by the autonomy of higher education institutions, competition, deregulation, and increased public control over educational activities.

Training of pharmacists (dispensing chemist) in EU countries takes into account the specificities of the European pharmaceutical legal field. It is important to indicate that the EU’s pharmaceutical legislation is based on the Copenhagen Declaration adopted at the European Forum of Pharmaceutical Societies in May 1994. Its main provisions are as follows: 1) medicines are not ordinary goods; 2) the pharmacist exercises control over the quality of medicines, guided by clear professional and ethical rules; 3) the pharmacist is the only specialist with the relevant qualifications necessary to make decisions regarding the admission of medicinal products to the market; 4) education and continuous training enable pharmacists to exercise appropriate control at all stages of the wholesale and retail circulation of medicinal products for the sake of public health and safety [11].

Now in the field of EU pharmacy there are normative documents defining the standards of industrial practice, the procedure for registration of medicines, the classification of drugs by category, as well as regulating the circulation of medicines (in particular those belonging to specific categories – innovative, immunological, homeopathic, as well as medicines for the treatment of rare diseases), pricing processes, etc. [12]. For example, in Poland, pharmaceutical legislation has been coordinated with European legislation since 2002, and marketing authorization procedures are based
on a pan-European system for the registration of medicinal products for humans, as defined in Regulation 726/2004 / EC [13].

We believe that in Ukraine, which has made it clear that it intends to be part of the European space, it should be borne in mind when educating future pharmacists in national higher medical (pharmaceutical) higher education institutions (HEIs) that in the EU there are associations that determine the actual directions of activity of European specialists in the pharmaceutical industry [12, 13]. Summarizing all the above, it should be indicated that in Ukraine professional associations, including in the field of pharmacy, have the right to act within the framework of the Law of Ukraine “On Public Associations” (2013, dated 01.01.2016). However, according to experts [14], it is not enough for the creation of organizations in the pharmaceutical market of Ukraine that would have the respective state delegated powers.

The European experience in quality assurance in higher education has certain milestones that are determined by events related to the adoption of a series of documents. Thus, the ISO 9000 series of international standards and recommendations for quality management have gained a worldwide reputation for being the basis for creating efficient education quality management systems. In the aforementioned document, the quality of education is considered as the degree of conformity of the set of a product’s characteristics, a process or a system according to the needs and expectations of educational services consumers [15].

A significant event for shaping the European landscape for the introduction of educational standards was the implementation of the “European Higher Education Quality Assessment Pilot Project” based on the recommendations of the European Commission (1998) in 2000 resulting in the creation of a European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, the purpose of which was to develop pan-European approaches to the establishment of a system for its provision in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), which at that time had become widespread as a result of the 1999 Bologna Declaration.

It is also important to mention that on November 4, 2004, the General Assembly for Quality Assurance in Higher Education decided to transform the former European Network into a European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA). Thus, a brief timeline of decision-making during the meetings of ministers responsible for higher education can be summarized as follows:
1) Prague Communiqué (Prague, Czech Republic, 2001) – defining general norms for quality assurance in higher education;
2) Berlin Communiqué (Berlin, Germany, 2003) – ensuring the quality of education at the interstate, national and institutional levels;
3) Bergen Communiqué (Bergen, Norway, 2005) – adoption of European standards and guidelines for quality assurance in education (ESG);
4) London Communiqué (London, United Kingdom, 2007) – increasing the responsibility for the quality of education at the national level and creating an internal quality assurance system;
5) Leuven Communiqué (Leuven and Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium, 2009) – the introduction of tools for creating transparency of higher education institutions (HEIs) in the field of higher education quality assurance;
6) Budapest-Vienna Declaration (Budapest, Hungary, Vienna, Austria 2010) – development of basic principles of academic freedom, autonomy, accountability of universities;
7) Bucharest Communiqué (Bucharest, Romania, 2012) – update of European Standards (ESG), support of the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR);

The experience of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries, which, based on of annual monitoring of educational statistics, seek to develop their national education policy in the light of new civilization challenges, is illustrative. In particular, the report “A Look at Education 2014: OECD Indicators” describes 30 OECD integrated indicators and presents their four groups: 1) the effectiveness of educational institutions; 2) financial and human resources invested in education; 3) access to education, participation in the educational process and transition to higher levels; 4) educational environment and organization of school education [17]. It is noteworthy that over the last three years the spectrum of indicators has been constantly changing, including new ones: the composition of teachers and management staff in education; approaches to ensuring equal access to secondary and higher education, etc. [18], differences between private and public educational institutions; ways of gaining the profession of a teacher (at school, university) [19]. It should be mentioned that in the future Ukraine plans to adopt national indicators of educational quality and national indicators of
educational efficiency (2015) and enter into the “Educational At Glance” (2017) [20]. We should say that the OECD’s “Education at Glance” is the authoritative source of information on the state of education around the world. It contains key information about educational institutions, the impact of education in different countries; financial and human resources; contribution to education, etc. [21].

Concerning the assessment of the current situation in the field of quality assurance and monitoring of the quality of higher education, we agree with scientists who believe that, unfortunately, Ukraine is lagging behind its pan-European level. Among the reasons stipulating the problems of quality assurance in higher education in the context of Ukraine’s entering the Bologna Process, the researchers highlight the following ones: lack of a crucial fundamental role of public administration and a modern model of quality management of higher education; an inconsistent public policy that does not reflect the urgent demands of employers to change the content of higher education; the further increasing expectations of students about the ability of the educational institution to meet their needs in the context of democratic transformations, the corporate interests of the teaching environment, etc. [22]. In our opinion, the aforementioned reasons fully relate to the level of quality assurance and monitoring of the HPE.

In the context of solving the tasks of the study, let us turn to the achievements of scientists [23] and express our solidarity with the research position of A. Kaidalova and O. Posylkina, who argue that the main directions of quality assurance of the HPE are:

• firstly, creation and implementation of a quality management system of a higher education institution, which should be built in by the requirements of the State Standard of Ukraine (DSTU) ISO 9001: 2009, taking into account the specific features of the educational sector, in particular the requirements of the DSTU-PIWA 2: 2007 “Standard ISO 9001: 2000 in the field of education”, by ENQA directives and standards and the European Foundation Quality Management (EFQM) model;

• secondly, the introduction of a proper rating system for the activities of higher medical (pharmaceutical) educational institutions, which is conditioned by the integration of processes in higher education and labor market needs, the requirements of the entrants concerning the quality of educational services, the need to improve the competitiveness of higher education institutions;
• thirdly, development of a comprehensive system of rating and motivation of scientific and pedagogical staff to improve the quantitative and qualitative indicators of teachers and departments to achieve the general objectives of Higher Educational Institutions as regards the qualitative training of future pharmacists and to ensure the necessary level of their competitiveness in the pharmaceutical market;
• fourthly, the involvement of employers in the development of a new generation of industry standards for HPE, updating the content of training programs, improving the quality of theoretical and practical training of pharmacy specialists.

At the present stage of the development of HPE in Ukraine, it is important for scientists and practitioners to realize that to effectively ensure the quality of education, the University must carry out continuous self-analysis of its educational activities. For this it needs the means of collecting and analyzing information about its activities in the field mentioned.

Conclusions. Summarizing all the above, we should mention that the development of an institutional quality assurance system in Ukraine may be based on European standards of internal quality assurance in universities to achieve high efficiency of functioning of the institution, its recognition by the public, increase of the rating of the university at national and international levels. Also, the implementation of European standards at the institutional level by HPE will be facilitated by the fact that higher education institutions will constantly respond to student feedback, will monitor, review and improve the effectiveness of student support services. Besides, the well-established goal of quality assurance in medical (pharmaceutical) higher education institutions of Ukraine can be assisted by a well-established educational system of the educational institution that openly and transparently provides quality data on the results to the interested parties (entrants, students, their parents, members of the public, etc.) educational services, the audit of educational resources (educational-methodological, information-library ones, etc.), provides with reliable information about the staffing of the institution, prospects for its development.

The priority of the directions of the authors’ future scientific investigations will be determined by the relevance of the research on the problems of standardization of HPE as a way of ensuring its quality in accordance with international requirements, in particular European ones.
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Transliteration of References:


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Abstracts

РЕВА ТЕТЯНА, НІЖЕНКОВСЬКА ІРИНА, ЧХАЛО ОКСАНА,
КОЗАК НАТАЛІЯ. Забезпечення європейських стандартів
якості вищої фармацевтичної освіти України на інститу
ційному рівні. У статті досліджуються проблеми забезпечення
європейських стандартів якості вітчизняної вищої фармацевтич-
Assurance of European quality standards of Ukraine's higher pharmaceutical education at the institutional level. The article researches the problems of assurance of European quality standards of domestic higher pharmaceutical education at the institutional level. Obtaining the quality education is claimed to directly depend on the quality of the requirements (goals, regulations, and standards), resources (programs, human resources, entrants, resource-and-technical support of an educational process, finance, etc.), and educational processes (scientific and educational activities, management, educational technology, etc.). The European experience concerning the quality of higher education is analyzed. The basis for the development of higher pharmaceutical education quality system in Ukraine is defined.
Keywords: quality of higher education, European quality standards of higher education, higher pharmaceutical education.

REWATA TETIANA, NIŻENKOWSKA IRYNA, CZCHAŁO OKSANA, KOZAK NATALIA. Zapewnienie europejskich standardów jakości wyższej edukacji farmaceutycznej Ukrainy na poziomie instytucjonalnym. Artykuł analizuje problemy związane z zapewnieniem europejskich standardów jakości krajowego wyższego szkolnictwa farmaceutycznego na poziomie instytucjonalnym. Należy zauważyć, że uzyskanie wysokiej jakości edukacji zależy bezpośrednio od jakości wymagań (celów, norm i standardów), zasobów (programów, zasobów ludzkich, kontyngentu uczestników, logistyki procesu edukacyjnego, finansów itp.) oraz procesów edukacyjnych (działalności naukowej i edukacyjnej, zarządzania, technologii edukacyjnych itp.). Analizowane jest europejskie doświadczenie w zapewnianiu jakości szkolnictwa wyższego. Określeno podstawy rozwoju systemu zapewnienia jakości wyższego szkolnictwa farmaceutycznego w Ukrainie.
Słowa kluczowe: jakość szkolnictwa wyższego, europejskie standardy jakości szkolnictwa wyższego, wyższe wykształcenie farmaceutyczne.