

WHAT SHOULD A PHARMACIST KNOW?

THE COMMONWEALTH STUDY OF PHARMACY.

BY JULIUS A. KOCH.

From the beginning the chief duty that has characterized the pharmacist is the compounding of physicians' prescriptions. This duty in conjunction with the ordinary sale of drugs over the counter made it highly necessary for the pharmacist to acquaint himself with a vast amount of specific knowledge regarding drugs, if he hoped to discharge his duties properly.

In the study of pharmaceutical education from the functional point of view it was decided, first, to make a thorough canvass of the knowledge required to compound prescriptions properly, taking into account everything from the method of receiving the prescription until it leaves the hands of the compounder as a thoroughly finished product.

The vast amount of information often required to compound even a fairly simple prescription is astonishing, and a consideration of the material afforded by a study of thousands of prescriptions should furnish a basis for determining the specific knowledge necessary for their safe and efficient compounding.

In a like manner the questions asked of the pharmacist in the daily routine of drug store practice will be grouped and studied with the idea of determining the background necessary in order that the pharmacist may answer these questions intelligently.

The Latin of the prescription, modes of manufacture and knowledge of physiology and anatomy will all in turn be exhaustively considered. In addition there will be the matter of the necessary apparatus or equipment for the pharmacist which will be based upon the actual needs in general drug store practice.

Since a proper equipment of ethical principles is a prime requisite for a well-ordered career, and since a knowledge of sound business principles is essential for the successful conduct of any enterprise, the ethics and economics of the store must be carefully studied.

Convinced that first-hand information is desirable, which information can be secured only by actual visit to the pharmacy, the committee has commenced the survey of one hundred pharmacies in each of fifteen centers in the United States. This will include cities in the East, West, North and South and drug stores of all representative kind, such as rural drug stores, department store pharmacies, hospital pharmacies, chain stores, neighborhood stores, ethical pharmacies, Polish, Jewish, Italian, Negro stores, etc.

The question of research in all its applications will be studied to determine, if possible, the extent to which encouragement of the spirit of research is necessary and desirable in order that the pharmacist and his profession may progress in keeping with his needs and deserts.

Further, a summation of the knowledge a pharmacist should possess in the opinion of physicians, dentists, veterinary surgeons, health officers and manufacturing pharmacists will furnish valuable material for study. These data together with the material indicated above, should, if properly interpreted, serve as a satisfactory basis for determining the specific knowledge a pharmacist should have in order to serve the public fully.