

The New Role of Pharmacy

The pharmacy profession currently faces a dilemma which is partly though not entirely of its own making.

Many other aspects of health care--the practice of medicine and surgery, hospital operations, and particularly drug manufacture--have developed and adopted new devices and techniques which have remarkably improved the provision of health services. In contrast, the number of important new methods introduced to enhance the efficiency of retail pharmacy operations, at least during the past two or three decades, has not been noteworthy.

The Task Force recommends that the National Center for Health Services Research and Development should develop and support research to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of community and hospital pharmacy operations.

The role of the pharmacist is viewed by many people as simply transferring pills from a large bottle to a small one--counting tablets, typing labels, and calculating the price. Much of his time is seen as devoted to routine merchandising of cosmetics, shaving supplies, stationery and other commodities which have little or no relationship to health care.