

Some hospitals--especially teaching institutions and those in major medical center complexes--are already using pharmacists as consultants on drug therapy. They serve not only as drug distributors, but also as sources of drug data for physicians, interns, residents, and nurses. They may participate in ward rounds with the staff, providing valuable drug information on both old and new drug products. Although they do not prescribe for patients, they enable the physicians who do prescribe to keep up more effectively with drug information.

While some pharmacists are already serving as drug information specialists, and others are probably competent to do so, not all pharmacists have adequate competency in this field. Some licensed pharmacists have received five or even six years of formal college training, but about 15 percent of those now in practice have received two years or less of formal pharmacy education, and nearly half of these have had courses lasting only about six months.

Pharmacy Education

The manner in which pharmacists, pharmacy associations, pharmacy schools, and the pertinent State pharmacy agencies respond to increasing demands for pharmaceutical services will unquestionably determine in large measure how the