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## The administrative and governmental landscape of hospital pharmacy in Greece



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**T**he Pharmacy Department in Greek hospitals is a part of the Medical Services Section, but its function also involves financial and administrative services. This means that hospital pharmacists, in addition to their scientific duties related to health care, also have the obligation to be involved with public economy issues. This represents a major problem for pharmacists in Greece as they have to deal with the hospital manager on a day-to-day operational basis.

As the Greek administration system is characterised by lack of decentralisation, most managerial decisions in the hospitals have been replaced by administrative rules, interpreted outside the hospital by different bureaus, in different ministries.

A significant issue for hospital pharmacies are personnel, e.g. being high level and well trained; organisation and funds. This all must take place within a constrictive system where movement is difficult. If a hospital pharmacy needs any kind of additional personnel three ministers (Health,

Finances, and Interior) and an independent authority (responsible for the legitimacy of the process for the recruitment of public servants) are involved. The recruitment process is done at the national level and takes between 2–4 years for a pharmacist to get a job at a hospital. This stands in sharp contrast to other countries, such as some parts of France, where the procedure takes a month.

Specialities and training are vanguard ideas with no application in Greek hospital pharmacies. Although a lot of hospital pharmacists are trained and have postgraduate titles in clinical pharmacy, public health, and other specialised fields, there is a lack of opportunities to apply these specialties in hospitals.

Laboratories and pharmacokinetics units or parenteral dilutions units, and special units involved with haematology or chemotherapy, are established in a few hospitals only after the strong intervention of qualified hospital pharmacists. All these activities are not covered by any official act.

The main problem is the small number of hospital pharmacists – less than 300 serving 132 hospitals. Greek hospital pharmacists, mainly because of the small number and the unbelievable bureaucracy, are usually lost in piles of documents, bills, orders, and arguing with the hospital manager for procurements and expenses.

Many projects have failed due to the lack of appropriate human resources. Of course there are some exceptions but they mainly refer to well-known pharmacists and brilliant managers.

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## Integrated healthcare services in Greece: reality or dream?



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**I**ntegrative health care has become a common term to describe teams of healthcare providers working together to provide patients the best of conventional and complementary health care [1]. In essence, the integra-

tive model of team practice in health care: i) consists of an interdisciplinary, non-hierarchical blending of both conventional medicine and complementary and alternative health care that provides a seamless continuum of decision-making

and patient-centred care and support, ii) is based on a specific set of core values that include the goals of treating the whole person, assisting the innate healing properties of each person, and promoting health and wellness as well as the preven-