

Developing a clear linkage between Foundation and Advanced Practice for Pharmacists in Singapore

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BACKGROUND

An Entry-to-practice framework had been used since 2011 for licensure in Singapore. In 2016, the Advanced Practice Framework (APF) was introduced as a developmental framework for pharmacists progressing into advanced practice under the National Pharmacy Strategy (NPS). There was no formal adoption of a framework between entry-to-practice and advanced practice resulting in variations in foundation training and competence. Using the Kotter's change management approach, we describe the formation and adoption of the Development Framework for Pharmacists (DFP) for seamless transition from entry to advanced level practice.

METHODOLOGY

A coalition was formed with local and international experts, to first define the performance criteria at foundation level and identify the required competencies (**Figure 1**). Alignment to descriptors at the various performance levels was validated. To ensure content validity, the Singapore Pharmacy Council (SPC) and education leads from healthcare institutions were engaged. Portfolio workshops established since 2018 were continued to enable adoption of the framework. In 2020, surveys were conducted to measure APF adoption and collect feedback at institutional and individual levels.

Figure 1: The formation and adoption of the DFP

Establish a sense of urgency

The demands of an evolving healthcare landscape prompted the need to develop an adaptive pharmacy workforce

Forming a powerful guiding coalition

 Collaboration with pharmacy leaders and international experts to advance workforce development initiative as part of the National Pharmacy Strategy (NPS)

Creating a vision

 Systematically build an adaptive and progressive workforce through lifelong learning

Communicating the vision

- Integrated communication towards a common vision:
- Key stakeholders were engaged regularly
- Competencies developed for the APF formed the base of the DFP (2020)

Empowering others to act on the vision

- Tan Tock Seng Hospital was commissioned by MOH as training provider for portfolio training workshops: Over 400 pharmacists were trained in portfolio building and assessment since May 2018
- Portfolio Building Toolkit (2019) was published for pharmacists to effectively prepare a practice portfolio. A revised version was published in June 2021

Planning for and creating short-term wins

 Results from surveys conducted in 2020 indicated that the portfolio training workshops promoted adoption of APF among 77% of participants across settings (N = 157 pharmacists)

Building on the change

- Foundation level competencies were integrated into APF to establish a competency continuum
- Feedback from survey conducted in 2020 provided insights for strategic planning of DFP implementation

Making it stick

- Portfolio training workshops will continue along with regular sharing of best practices among pharmacy leaders on the institutional implementation of DFP
- Competency standards will be reviewed regularly to ensure currency of practice

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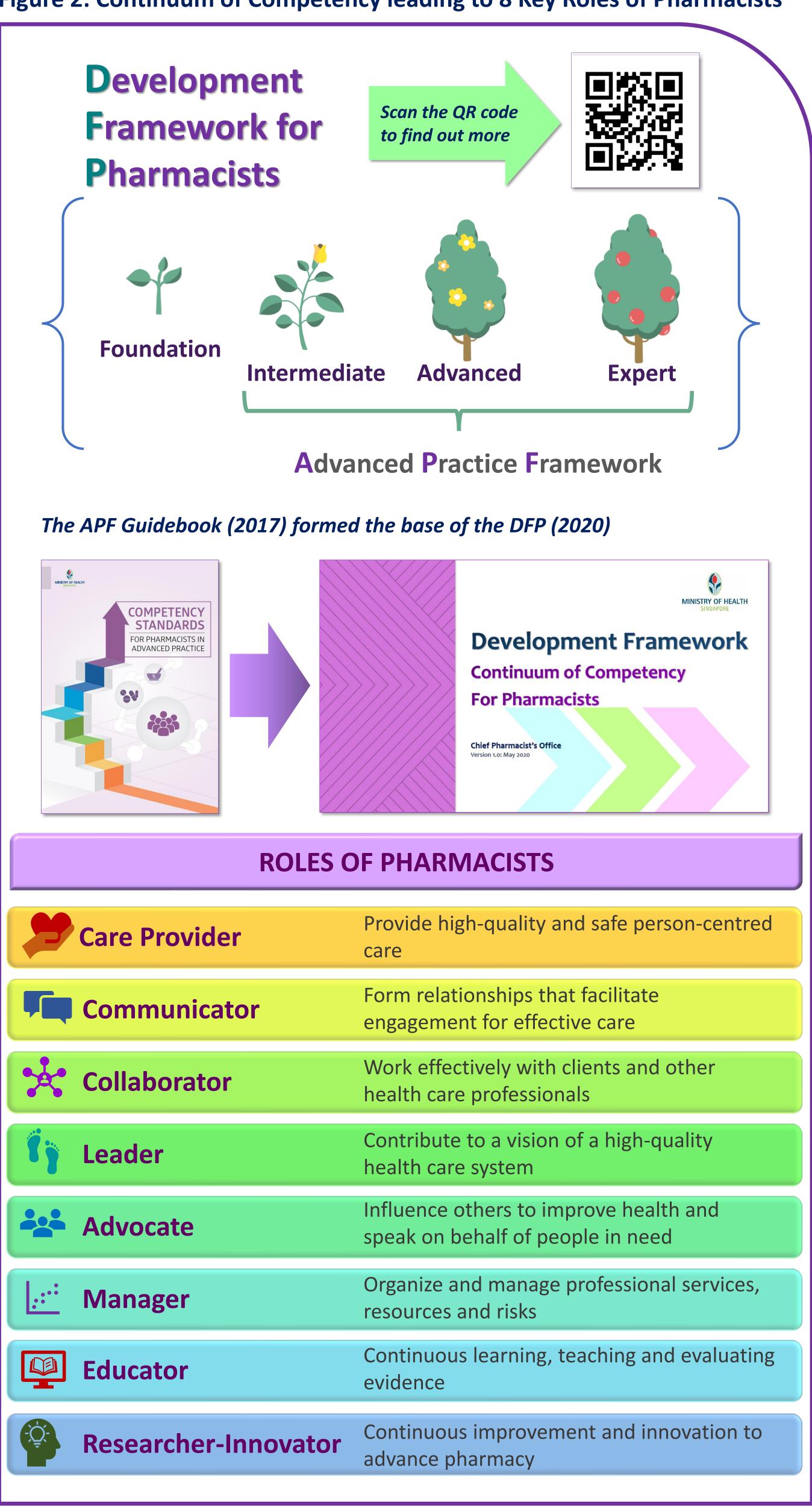
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RESULTS

The DFP establishes a competency continuum across seven domains, four performance levels and towards eight key roles for pharmacists (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Continuum of Competency leading to 8 Key Roles of Pharmacists



DISCUSSION

Feedback from the surveys conducted in 2020 showed that while the framework has been implemented across sectors, there was variability in implementation models. Enablers in terms of resource allocation and skills training are required to promote higher adoption rate of the framework. Moving forward, pre-foundation educational outcomes could be integrated into DFP to ensure seamless transition from university to workplace.

CONCLUSION

A continuum of competency was developed to enable a systematic and harmonized progression from foundation to advanced level practice across different settings. The DFP guides self-directed learning and career development towards advanced practice.