

A Qualitative Study with the Turkish Pharmacists' Association Chairman on the History and Activities of Turkish Pharmacists' Association

Türk Eczacıları Birliği'nin Tarihçesi ve Faaliyetleri Üzerine Nitel Bir Çalışma

Elif ULUTAŞ DENİZ^{1*}
Bilge SÖZEN ŞAHNE¹
Selen YEĞENOĞLU¹

¹Hacettepe University, Faculty of Pharmacy,
Department of Pharmacy Management
06100 Ankara, TURKEY.

***Corresponding Author:**
Elif ULUTAŞ DENİZ
Hacettepe University, Faculty of Pharmacy,
Department of Pharmacy Management, 06100
Ankara, Turkey.
E mail: eczelifulutas@gmail.com
Phone: 0312 305 42 26

ABSTRACT

Organizing in terms of professional side of the pharmacists, one of the health professional groups which is one of the closest to society, is important for providing professional development, protecting the professional rights, and increasing the quality of the services they provide. At this point, Turkish Pharmacists Association (TPA), which is the professional national organization of pharmacists, has important duties. In this research, in which TPA's activities and its history are examined, the literature has been searched to reach the related information and presented information obtained. At the same time, data resulting from in-depth interview with Pharmacist Erdogan Colak, who is the President of the 40th Term, in 11 August 2017 are provided in detail.

Keywords: Pharmacist(s), ethics, professional association, history, Turkish Pharmacists' Association

ÖZET

Topluma en yakın sağlık meslek gruplarından biri olan eczacıların mesleki yönden örgütlenmeleri, gerek mesleki ilerlemenin sağlanması, gerek meslek haklarının korunması, gerekse sundukları hizmetlerinin kalitesinin artması açısından önemlidir. Bu noktada, eczacıların meslek örgütü olan, Türk Eczacıları Birliği'ne (TEB) önemli görevler düşmektedir. TEB'in yürüttüğü çalışmalar ve tarihçesinin incelendiği bu araştırmada, söz konusu bilgilere ulaşmak için, literatür taraması yapılmış ve elde edilen bilgilere yer verilmiştir. Aynı zamanda, 40. Dönem Başkanı Ecz. Erdoğan Çolak ile 11 Ağustos 2017'de yapılan derinlemesine görüşme verileri, detaylı bir şekilde sunulmuştur.

Anahtar kelimeler: Eczacı(lar), etik, mesleki kuruluş, tarihçe, Türk Eczacıları Birliği

1. Introduction

Professional organizations, which have a great importance in terms of individuals' realizing their purposes of being organized, also undertake various tasks for providing professional development [1,2] rewards for contributions, dissemination of organizational knowledge, member interdependence enhancement activ-

ities, and reliance on external membership requirements. In that respect, organizations which offer services especially to healthcare professionals also contribute to the community healthcare in addition to the services they offer to their members.

In this context, the professional organization of pharmacists, one of the professional groups which are closest

to the community, is important for both ensuring professional improvement and protection of their professional rights and increasing the quality of the service they offer [3,4]. At this point, the professional organization of the pharmacists, TPA has important duties. In a recent report, TPA has determined its vision as follows: *“To ensure that pharmacists are described as the members of a respectable, scientific, constantly evolving and irreplaceable professional group by all segments of the society as a professional organization which plans and realizes studies, scientific, technical and strategic developments for the improvement of public health and pharmacy profession”*[5].

As a nongovernmental organization, TPA is a professional organization with public institution status and a mass organization that has a democratic operation [4,6,7]. Carrying out its activities with 54 Chambers of Pharmacists, TPA offers services in relation to all areas of pharmacy⁴.

Pharmacists’ professional organizations in Turkey since 19th century

Pharmacies which were established for the first time in Anatolia during Seljuk era has started to take its current form in time. The first example of professional organization of pharmacists is “Société de Pharmacie de Constantinople – Cemiyet-i Eczacıyan der Asitane-i Aliye” (Pharmacy Society of Istanbul) which was established in 1864^{8,9-11}. Following this, professional organizations were established in İstanbul and various parts of Anatolia [8,11]:

- Association Pharmaceutique de Secours Mutuel de Constantinople – İstanbul Pharmacists’ Association of Mutual Aid (İstanbul, 1891)
- Association des Pharmaciens Etrangers – Foreign Pharmacists’ Association (İstanbul, 1907)
- Union Pharmaceutique Ottomane – Ottoman Pharmacist Union (İstanbul, 1908)
- Société des Pharmaciens de l’Empire Ottoman – Ottoman Empire Pharmacists’ Society (İstanbul, 1909)
- Farmakeftiki Enosis Smirneon – Pharmacists’ Association of İzmir (İzmir, 1909)
- Association des droguistes de Constantinople – Dersaadet Pharmaceutical Merchants’ Association (İstanbul, 1921)

Among the abovementioned organizations, “Société des Pharmaciens de l’Empire Ottoman – Ottoman Empire Pharmacists Society” which was established in 1909 has formed the foundation of the TPA as an organization which was established with aims such as improving the working conditions of pharmacists, standardizing pharmaceutical products, organizing pharmacy education [8,12].

As in many other fields, significant progress has been made in the field of pharmacy following the proclamation of the Republic. In 1924, former members of the Ottoman

Empire Pharmacists’ Society established the “Pharmacists’ Association of Turkey” which involves only the independent pharmacists. Later, “Turkish Pharmacologists’

Association” was established in 1930 by another group of pharmacists to bring all pharmacists together and later it continued its activities under the names of “Turkey Emgen Institution” (1935), “Pharmacists’ Association of Turkey” (1937) and “Pharmacy Owners Society of Turkey” (1954) after all the members consisted of only independent pharmacists [8,9–11].

In 1956, TPA, which would ensure that Turkish Pharmacy progress with firmer steps and in a more organized manner, was established when the Law No 6643 was published on the Official Gazette dated 2 February 1956 and No 9223 [8–11]. Following the amendments in this law in 1963, 1983, 1985, 1995, 1997 and 2015, it took its current form [13]. In Turkish Pharmacists’ Association Regulations drawn up in accordance with the Law No 6643, the duties, responsibilities and operation of the association are described in detail [14].

The symbol of TPA contains elements of the insignia of pharmacy both in Turkey and the world. The symbol that contains the Bowl of Hygeia and Laurus seedling has been representing the Association since 1956 [15].

Professional Ethics and Turkish Pharmacists’ Association

The concept of professional ethics which is defined as *“a system of principles and rules which makes arrangements for directing all professional activities towards good, limits the personal desires of the professionals and prevents them from stepping out of a certain line, develops professional ideals and alienates professionals without principles out of the profession”* [16] is also important in terms of regulating the relationships of the colleagues with each other [17].

TPA is an institution which also undertakes duties in relation to determining and implementing the professional ethics rules about pharmacy. Within the scope of “Turkish Pharmacists Deontology Code” published in 1968, elements in relation to pharmacy ethics are within the responsibility of TPA¹⁸. Works for renewing the Code are also carried out within the TPA.

In that respect, TPA and chambers of pharmacists carry out works about what to do in case of various ethical rules violated by the pharmacists. Discipline committees of chambers of pharmacists and High Discipline Committee of the TPA carries out activities in that respect. In the study of Kıran and Mandıracıoğlu, it is stated that these committees frequently encounter deontological violations due to competition [19].

In addition to all these, TPA and chambers of pharmacists also continue struggling with collusion which is one of the

biggest ethical problems of pharmacy profession.

2. Material and Methods

In this research, in which TPA's activities and its history are examined, the literature has been searched to reach the related information and presented information obtained. At the same time, an in-depth interview with Pharmacist Erdogan Colak, who is the President of the 40th Term, was conducted in 11 August 2017.

3. Results and Discussion

Since its establishment in 1956, there has been 40 different administration terms in the TPA which carries out its operation within the framework of related legislation. The association is currently carrying out its activities under the administration of the 40th Term Central Committee.

In August 2017, an extensive interview was made with the 40th Term Chairman Pharmacist Erdoğan Çolak at the headquarters of the Association at Willy Brandt Street in Ankara in relation to the activities that has been carried out from past to present [20].

During the interview, Chairman Çolak stated that mostly community pharmacy activities are carried out since a significant majority of the pharmacists offer services in community pharmacies in our country:

"Community pharmacy is dominant in our country. This is an obligation, if you want to open a pharmacy, you have to register in the Chamber of Pharmacists. Therefore, we have approximately 31-32 thousand members and 26 thousand of them are community pharmacists... Therefore, mostly their problems are in the agenda. Although there is a need to create more scientific ideas and make projects which can open up the horizon and clear the way of the profession, we also have to deal with the process of perception of pharmacies as a business which are dominated by community pharmacy and which are also a public and healthcare service point. In that case, you have to work bidirectionally as a professional organization. Development of the scientific aspect of a profession is our real job, the matter of creating professional policies. However, we have to offer a solution to economic problems on the other hand."

In addition to activities they carry out within the scope of their legal framework, nongovernmental organizations are also expected to make social responsibility projects [21]. There are social responsibility projects carried out by TPA as well. Solidarity is continued within the profession within the scope of its charity fund [22]. Çolak's statements regarding the social responsibility projects of the Association are as follows:

"...TPA has built schools and carried out social responsibility projects. The association has built schools for exam-

ple in Diyarbakır, Van, Antalya and Kars, one in each. It has built a hospital in a district of Erzurum, a substance addiction centre in Diyarbakır and transferred them to the Ministry of Health. We have opened social areas for our colleagues, we have built a hotel in Ankara and social facilities in İzmir for our colleagues. We have sent mobile trucks to earthquake zones. We have built tents to provide medication. We have sent medicine aid to various location in the world. We have sent aids to several countries such as Sudan and Somalia. We have provided medication, food and clothes to Syrian refugees. We have provided financial contribution in relation to medicines in the Turkish Red Crescent's aid to several countries. We try to fulfil such social responsibilities."

TPA has carried out many activities in various fields throughout its history of 61 years. Some of the examples of significant activities in previous terms given by the 40th Term Chairman Çolak are as follows:

"Protocol standardization which started in 1980s has evolved into making contract with only one institution besides many institutions in 2005. Therefore, protocols are important as well... Establishing Pharmacy Academy within the TPA is an important development, it is the point where the matter of contributing in the scientific development of the profession is realized... The moves regarding producing drugs in pharmacies during Mekin Tanker's term are significant. Again, the surcharge at the pharmacies in the same period is important as well, because pharmacists were working with a profitability depending on medicine in an inflationist period and inflation was over hundred percent back then; at this point, surcharge was an important parameter in terms of medicines' finding their own values. It is an important task to find a solution to that."

Çolak also mentioned the importance of the "smart pharmacy" project among the current activities in his term. He stated that they consider the pharmacists as a consultant for people and consider pharmacies as a centre where a preliminary interview is conducted and people are referred to a physician and he mentioned the details of the project:

"...We also have a project in relation to activating and updating the knowledge and experience of the pharmacists at the centre and thus providing a positive return to the patient. We made an agreement with a professional group which carries out the Training Coordination of FIP (Federation of International Pharmacists). We started this project two years ago. We had conducted a preliminary study in Konya in relation to blood pressure... We had placed computerized blood pressure monitors in 29 pharmacies with the permission of the Ministry of Health. By measuring the blood pressure of the patients who are over 40-45 years old, we have seen that 11,5% of them have blood pressure problems and we have referred them to a physician. People who live without being aware of

their blood pressure problems have heart attack, cerebral haemorrhage and stroke risk after some time. We have ensured that they continue their lives by making a preliminary diagnosis and measuring their blood pressure for 1 week or 15 days and then referring them to a physician.”

Activities are continued within the scope of this “Smart Pharmacy” project [23]. Çolak also stated that they contacted training commissions of FIP and works have been carried out to raise awareness in relation to asthma and significant improvements were achieved in healing rates. He said that the topic of the next study will be diabetes and the following in relation to this:

“Now, we will realize the diabetes module. Our aim is to:

1. Protect people's health
2. Serve to public health
3. Ensure that pharmacists lead this service and raise awareness
4. Make this visible by the medical authority and public.

In relation to online medicine sales which directly affect public health, he stated that they collaborated with the Ministry of Health and they work in coordination with the TMMDA (Turkish Medicines and Medical Devices Agency):

“We founded a special department within TPA in relation to internet sales. We send the complaints received to TMMDA immediately. TMMDA has closed 6-7 thousand websites so far and ceased the operation of places which make advertisements or sales in the field of medicines and healthcare. We have a coordination with the Agency in that respect.”

In addition, Çolak mentioned the legislation change in relation to pharmacy:

“There are 44 faculties of pharmacy in Turkey. While there were 300-350 graduates in the past, today approximately 2000 people graduate from these faculties. We have enacted a law for this in 2012. I think, opening pharmacies according to the district is one of the significant changes, it is a change which has historical importance. It will become harder to open a pharmacy after 2018.”

Within the scope of next term activities, Çolak mentioned a strategic plan and said:

“TPA has a strategic plan in relation to its strengths and weaknesses, developments in the field of healthcare, medicine and pharmacy and the steps to be taken accordingly in 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021. It has a multidimensional study with all shareholders of the sector such as the Ministries of Development, Treasury, Finance, Health and Labour and the Medicine Industry, pharmaceutical companies, cooperatives, warehouses, pharmacists, universities and academicians. We will publish it in September, it is shaped.”

Lastly, Çolak stated that they have some efforts to get medicine licenses and produce medicines within the localization concept within the scope of next term activities.

4. Conclusions

TPA, which has been working diligently for over 60 years for both advancing profession of pharmacy and improving the quality of the service offered, continues its activities to bringing pharmacy practices in Turkey to world standards and even moving one step ahead by keeping up with the changing conditions in time.

In order to protect and improve the professional reputation and optimization of the healthcare services, it is thought that pharmacists' protecting the professional organization in accordance with the history of the professional organization which dates back to the 19th century and the ethical principles of the profession is quite important.

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank Ecz. Erdoğan Çolak, who was elected again as the head of the association for the 41st Term, for these valuable information.

References

1. Can N: Örgütlenme Gereksinimi ve Önemi. Eğitim ve Bilim 2002, 27(125):74-78.
2. Gruen TW, Summers JO, Acito F: Relationship Marketing Activities, Commitment, and Membership Behaviors in Professional Associations. J Mark 2000, 64(3):34-49. doi:10.1509/jmkg.64.3.34.18030.
3. Kıran B: Meslek Örgütlerinin Önemi ve Seçimler. Eczacının Sesi. Available from: <http://eczacininsesi.com/index.php?yon=ozgur&id=662>. Published 2013. Accessed August 28, 2017.
4. TEB. Turkish Pharmacists' Association. Available from: <http://www.teb.org.tr/content/19/Turkish-Pharmacists-Association>. Accessed August 3, 2017.
5. TEB. Türk Eczacıları Birliği - Vizyon-Misyon. Available from: <http://www.teb.org.tr/content/41/Vizyon-Misyon>. Accessed September 7, 2017.
6. TEB. Çoğulcu Demokraside Meslek Örgütleri. Available from: http://www.teb.org.tr/content/6/Coğulcu_Demokraside_Meslek_Orgütleri. Accessed August 28, 2017.
7. Berber MS: Demokratik Kitle Örgütü Olarak Türk Tabipleri Birliği. Türk Kütüphaneciliği 2009, 23(4):894-901.
8. Mat A: Cemiyet-i Eczacıyan Der Asitane-i Aliye'den Türk Eczacıları Birliği'ne. In: Bir Kurumun Öyküsü. Ankara:TEB; 2006.
9. Baylav N: Eczacılık Tarihi. İstanbul: Yörük Matbaası; 1968.
10. Şehsuvaroğlu BN. Eczacılık Tarihi Dersleri. İstanbul: Hüsnütabiat Matbaası; 1970.
11. Baytop T: Türk Eczacılık Tarihi. İstanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi Yayınları No: 3358, Eczacılık Fak. No. 47; 1985.
12. Erichsen R: Scientific Research and Science Policy in Turkey. Cah d'Etudes sur la Méditerranée Orient le monde Turco-Iranien 1998, 25:1-21.
13. Türk Eczacıları Birliği Kanunu.; 1956. Available from: <http://www.mevzuat.gov.tr/MevzuatMetin/1.3.6643.pdf> Accessed August 4, 2017.
14. Türk Eczacıları Birliği Yönetmeliği.; 1995. Available from: <http://www.mevzuat.gov.tr/Metin.Asp?MevzuatKoVolume 38 / Number 2 / July 2018 / pp. 53-57 57> Ulutaş Deniz E. et al Hacettepe University

- Journal of the Faculty of Pharmacy d=7.5.6264&MevzuatIliki=0&-sourceXmlSearch= Accessed August 27, 2017.
15. Griffenhagen G: Signs and Signboards of the Pharmacy. *Pharm Hist* 1990, 32(1):12-21.
 16. Yıldırım G, Kadioğlu S: Etik ve Tıp Etiği Kavramları. *C Ü Tıp Fakültesi Derg* 2007, 29(2):7-12.
 17. İşgüden B, Çabuk A: Meslek Etiği ve Meslek Etiğinin Meslek Yaşamı Üzerine Etkileri. *Balıkesir Üniversitesi Sos Bilim Enstitüsü Dergi* 2006, 9(16):59-86.
 18. Yağtu Ş: Eczacılık Deontolojisi (Meslek ahlakı ve Adabı). Ankara Üniversitesi Eczacılık Fakültesi Yayınları; Ankara, 1968.
 19. Kıran B, Mandıracıoğlu A: Deontolojik Suçların İzmir Eczacı Odası Onur Kurulu ve Türk Eczacıları Birliği Yüksek Onur Kurulu'nda Yargılama Süreçleri ve Buna Etkili Faktörlerin Saptanması. *Ankara Eczac Fakültesi Derg* 2009, 38(4):285-303.
 20. Ecz. Erdoğan Çolak ile Derinlemesine Görüşme.
 21. Vural BA, Çoşkun G: Kurumsal Sosyal Sorumluluk ve Etik. *Gümüşhane Üniversitesi İletişim Fakültesi Elektronik Derg* 2011, 1:61-87.
 22. Türk Eczacıları Birliği Yardımlaşma Sandığı Yönetmeliği.; 1997. Available from: <https://www.teb.org.tr/content/2/Yardımlaşma-Sandığı>. Accessed August 28, 2017.
 23. Available from: <http://www.rehbereczanem.com> Accessed August 28, 2017.