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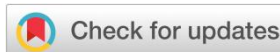
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Research Article

## Prospects for the Evolution of the Pharmaceutical Code of Deontology in Côte d'Ivoire

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### Abstract

The pharmaceutical code of deontology governs the obligations and rights of pharmacists, thus ensures ethical and professional standards respect in the exercise of their profession. In Côte d'Ivoire, the first code of deontology, comes from Law No. 62-249 of July 31, 1962. And it has been revised in 2015 with the adoption of Law No. 2015-534 of July 20, 2015. The objective of this study was to assess the prospects for pharmaceutical code of deontology revision in Côte d'Ivoire. We analyzed the code of deontology currently in application in Côte d'Ivoire and compared it to the previous code of 1962, and then to the French code of deontology, from which Côte d'Ivoire inherited pharmaceutical sector legislative framework. The results of this study show that the Ivorian pharmaceutical ethics code was restructured in 2015 to include not only community pharmacists, as in 1962, but also pharmacists working in other types of pharmaceutical establishments, as well as pharmacy students providing temporary coverage. The fundamental pharmaceutical law principles were maintained while introducing new obligations for pharmacists, for instance the promotion of medicines derived from traditional pharmacopoeia. This obligation allows the Ivorian code to distinguish itself from other codes, such as that of France, whose 1995 code shared many similarities, with the exception of the pharmacist's new responsibilities. In 2026, the adoption of a new deontology code in France took into account aspects related to pharmacists' online communication that Côte d'Ivoire can draw upon for the revision of its code of deontology.

**Keywords:** Deontology code – Pharmacists – Côte d'Ivoire - France

## INTRODUCTION

Pharmaceutical Deontology encompasses ethical, moral, and professional rules that govern pharmacy<sup>1</sup> practice. Pharmaceutical deontology code outlines pharmacists obligations and rights, ensuring adherence to ethical and professional standards in their practice.

It applies to all pharmacists and professional practice companies registered with the Order of Pharmacists. It also applies to students authorized to work as locums under certain conditions. The code of deontology confers both rights and responsibilities on pharmacists. Failure by a pharmacist to comply with these rules may be sanctioned by the disciplinary boards of the Order.

Côte d'Ivoire is a former French colony whose first legislation applicable to the pharmaceutical sector, dating from 1954<sup>2</sup>, applied to France and its overseas territories, including Côte d'Ivoire. Following Côte d'Ivoire's independence in 1960 and Pharmacists<sup>3</sup> Order creation the same year, a code of deontology was adopted shortly thereafter.

This is the first code of deontology in Côte d'Ivoire, stemming from Law No. 62-249 of July 31<sup>st</sup>, 1962, which established a pharmaceutical code of deontology<sup>4</sup>. The second code of deontology, currently in application, is enshrined in Law No. 2015-534 of July 20, 2015, concerning pharmaceutical deontology<sup>5</sup> code.

This code of deontology is of considerable interest to the pharmaceutical profession in Côte d'Ivoire, especially given several changes observed in other countries, such as the assignment of new responsibilities to pharmacists and Rapid Diagnostic and Orientation Tests (RDOTs) use in pharmacies in France.<sup>6</sup> In Côte d'Ivoire, new practices are being observed in pharmacies, such as the use of rapid tests for diagnosing malaria and measuring blood glucose, measuring vital signs such as blood pressure, and also the use of advertising on social media. Therefore, it seemed appropriate to examine the current state of the pharmaceutical code of ethics, its evolution compared to the initial regulations governing the pharmaceutical sector inherited from the former French colony, and its relationship to the French code of ethics.

The objective of this study was to assess the prospects for the evolution of the Ivorian deontology code .

## METHODOLOGY

Systematic review was the methodology used. It consisted in researching Ivorian code of deontology different versions, which were then analyzed and compared to assess the evolution of the code of deontology in application, in Côte d'Ivoire. This code was subsequently compared to the French code of deontology, analyzing not only its alignment with the

evolution of the pharmaceutical profession internationally but also its adaptation to current professional practices in Côte d'Ivoire. Potential areas for Ivorian code of deontology future development were highlighted.

## RESULTS

### Comparison of the first code of deontology with the code of deontology currently applicable in Côte d'Ivoire

The first pharmaceutical code of deontology in Côte d'Ivoire was adopted in 1962, two years after the creation of Côte d'Ivoire National Order of Pharmacists by a 1960 law. This code was revised only once, in 2015, following the adoption of new laws applicable to the pharmaceutical sector.

While the legal structure remained unchanged, the code of deontology underwent a reorganization (Table I), particularly in its titles and chapters. Title V, where the most significant changes were observed, is now dedicated to the duties of pharmacists according to their area of practice, including community pharmacies, hospital pharmacies, pharmaceutical manufacturing and wholesale distribution facilities, and medical biology. (Table II)

**Table I:** Pharmaceutical code of ethics form evolution in Côte d'Ivoire

	ANCIENT PHARMACEUTICAL DEONTOLOGY CODE	CURRENT DEONTOLOGY CODE
LEGAL TEXT	Law No. 62-249 of July 31 <sup>st</sup> , 1962 establishing a pharmaceutical deontology code	Law No. 2015-534 of 20 <sup>th</sup> July 2015 establishing a pharmaceutical deontology code
TITLES	7	8
CHAPTERS	12	7
SECTIONS	0	3

**Table II:** Differences observed in ancient code titles and the applicable deontology code in force in Côte d'Ivoire

TITLES	1962 DEONTOLOGY CODE	2015 DEONTOLOGY CODE
TITLE I	General duties of the pharmacist	General provisions
TITLE II	Prohibition of certain methods in customer acquisition	General duties of the pharmacist
TITLE III	Relationship with government officials	Prohibition of certain methods in customer acquisition and prohibition of certain agreements or contracts
TITLE IV	Rules to observe in relations with the public	Duties of the pharmacist in the protection of public health and in the protection of health
TITLE V	Relations with members of the medical professions	Duties of the community pharmacist and hospital pharmacist, the pharmacist working in a pharmaceutical manufacturing establishment, wholesale distribution, and the clinical pharmacist
TITLE VI	Criminal penalties	Relationships with other healthcare professionals
TITLE VII	Various Provisions	Criminal Penalties
TITLE VIII	Not applicable	Various and finals Provisions

**Table III:** Some differences between the ancient code and the current pharmaceutical deontology code in Côte d'Ivoire

	<b>1962's DEONTOLOGY CODE (ANCIENT DEONTOLOGY CODE)</b>	<b>DEONTOLOGY CODE IN FORCE SINCE 2015 (CURRENT DEONTOLOGY CODE)</b>
Exercise of the profession	Focus on practice in the pharmacy	Revaluation of the profession
Scope	All pharmacists	Registered pharmacists and pharmacy's students authorized to perform locum work
Target	Pharmacist with community Pharmacy	All pharmaceutical professions
Pharmaceutical manufacturing and wholesale distribution companies	Reference to the responsible pharmacist without further details	Technical management by pharmacists Practical experience of pharmacists to fill certain key positions
Biological pharmacists	Reference to the laboratory director	Fulfilling their professional duties in accordance with specific ethics and professional standards
Respect for the principle of personal practice	Personal practice principle by the pharmacist	Exception to personal practice principle: proximity of the pharmacy premises and the medical biology activity in the case of dual practice by the pharmacist

### **Common points: maintaining the fundamental pharmaceutical law principles from the first code to current pharmaceutical deontology code in Côte d'Ivoire**

In substance, there are several similarities between the ancient code and the 2015's pharmaceutical deontology code. The similarities observed mainly concern profession foundation, which is respect for human life. The current code of ethics reaffirms the fundamental principles of public health and pharmaceutical law, namely medication dispensing, the requirement for pharmacists to practice independently and the incompatibility of working in a community pharmacy with another healthcare profession, the obligation for pharmacists to manage hospital pharmacies, and the prohibition against dispensing unauthorized medications. The deontological rules common to all pharmacists are maintained.

Furthermore, the 2015's pharmaceutical deontology code retains the requirements for pharmacists to maintain good relationships with members of other professions.

### **Deontological rules definition according to current deontology code pharmaceutical establishment type in Côte d'Ivoire**

#### Pharmacist role and functions

In the 1962's deontology code, the emphasis was placed on the practice of pharmacy in community pharmacies, and the concepts of pharmacist's owners, managers, assistants, and locums were included. References were also made to the role of pharmacist responsible for manufacturing facilities and wholesale pharmaceutical products.

The deontology code in effect since 2015 introduced the concept of the delegated pharmacist in pharmaceutical manufacturing and wholesale distribution establishments. The term "biological pharmacist" is used

in place of the laboratory director found in the 1962's code.

#### Description of dispensation act

The 2015's Ivorian Pharmaceutical deontology code describes the act of dispensing medication for the first time, whereas the 1962 Deontology Code, in Article 24, simply stated that medications should be dispensed with "meticulous care."

Article 49 of the 2015 Deontology Code, stipulates that the act of dispensing comprises three successive steps: "medical prescription pharmaceutical analysis, if one exists; preparation of the doses to be administered, if applicable; and information and advice provision necessary for the proper use of the medication."

Emphasis is placed on the appropriate advice that the pharmacist must provide to patients.

#### Consideration of different pharmaceutical establishments

New features have been introduced in the 2015's deontology code, notably regarding the pharmacist's duties, which are now categorized according to the type of pharmaceutical establishment. The previous code only considered community pharmacies. The current deontology code reflects societal changes and the evolution of the pharmaceutical profession, which has shifted from a predominantly community pharmacy workforce to a more diverse group of professionals working in various sectors related to the drug supply chain.

The deontology code also addresses the pharmacist's duties, with a focus on pharmaceutical establishments. A distinction is made between establishments open to the public, that is community pharmacies and hospital pharmacies, manufacturing and wholesale distribution establishments, as well as medical biology laboratories. Specific ethical rules are thus established for hospital

pharmacies and medical biology laboratories. The pharmacist-biologist now has the option to refuse to perform a sample collection.

#### Pharmacist relationships with other individuals and sanctions

With the 2015's deontology code, the positive relationships that pharmacists must maintain with medical profession members and other healthcare professionals are extended to veterinarians, that professional independence pharmacists must respect.

Pharmacists must also maintain good and professional relationships with the public.

#### **New deontological obligations for pharmacists in Côte d'Ivoire**

The Ivorian pharmaceutical deontology code includes new obligations for pharmacists, specially combating quackery, continuing professional development, and promoting traditional medicines. Regarding continuing professional development, pharmacists are required to participate in ongoing training, which is verified upon renewal of their registration to the Order of Pharmacists.

Concerning traditional medicines, pharmacists must actively participate in the research, development, and promotion of these medicines.

#### **Côte d'Ivoire pharmaceutical code of deontology positioning in relation to other code of deontology: the example of France**

Pharmaceutical deontology code in application in Côte d'Ivoire since 2015 presents a number of fundamental principles applicable to the pharmaceutical profession, principles also found in the French code of ethics of 1995, which was adopted after the 1953 code. These principles include respect for life and the human person, as well as the public health mission that pharmacists must fulfill. They also address the pharmacist's personal practice, the prohibition of holding multiple positions, and the professional independence that pharmacists must maintain, even if they own or co-own only one pharmacy. Pharmacists must ensure their continuing professional development and respect professional confidentiality, as well as the rules of practical application in the practice of their profession. Pharmacists are responsible for their own actions as well as the actions of colleagues under their supervision.

The code of deontology stipulates that pharmacists must conduct themselves in accordance with the integrity and dignity of the profession, while respecting collegiality duty, loyalty, and solidarity among pharmacists.

Regarding prohibited practices, these are found in the 1962's Ivorian pharmaceutical code of deontology, the current 2015 code, and the 1995 French code of deontology.

These prohibited practices include, in particular, unfair competition, collusion between doctors and pharmacists, peddling, and false information or advertising.

With new French pharmaceutical code of deontology adoption in 2026, it differs from the code of deontology currently in application in Côte d'Ivoire in several respects. The new French code of deontology extends to pharmacists who are nationals of a European Union Member State or party to the Agreement on the European Economic Area and stipulates respect for human dignity even after death. Pharmacists can now report domestic violence. Pharmacists using digital tools and services are required to comply with the rules of pharmaceutical deontology and the security rules for digital services. Pharmacists must ensure the safekeeping and protection of patient data. Pharmacists may refuse to fill a prescription but must ensure continuity of patient care.

Furthermore, pharmacists are free to communicate information to the public, by any means, including on a website, that may contribute to the pharmacist's free choice, particularly regarding their qualifications, professional background, and practice conditions. Community pharmacists may use the websites of the group or network to which they belong to communicate relevant information. He can advertise products not listed in the pharmaceutical monopoly and his pharmacy through any channel.

#### **DISCUSSION**

The Ivorian deontology code shares many similarities with the French 1995<sup>7</sup> code.

Thus, the diversity of the pharmaceutical profession is taken into account in the Ivorian deontology code, which has been in force since 2015<sup>5</sup>, unlike the 1962's code<sup>4</sup>, which focused primarily on community pharmacists.

Furthermore, one of the most impactful reforms to pharmacy practice in Côte d'Ivoire is the amendment of articles 13 and 14 of Law 2015-533 of July 20, 2015, concerning the practice of pharmacy<sup>8</sup>, implemented as part of the transposition of the 2008's West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU) Decision on pharmacists<sup>9</sup>free movement. Restrictions related to nationality have now been lifted. Access to the pharmaceutical profession is open to citizens of Côte d'Ivoire and other WAEMU countries. It is therefore important that pharmacists from the WAEMU region authorized to practice in Côte d'Ivoire comply with code of deontology provisions, as in France with the adoption of the new code of deontology applicable to citizens of the European Union, taking into account pharmacy practice community dimension.

Regarding pharmacy independent practice, while the principle remains, exceptions are provided for in the 2015's Ivorian code of deontology. This allows community pharmacists to perform medical biology tests, provided that the two establishments are located near each other, with the option for the clinical pharmacist to refuse to perform a sample collection.

However, the code of deontology in application in Côte d'Ivoire has limitations, particularly regarding the prohibition on providing care in pharmacies, as

stipulated in Article 52. This could hinder Ivorian pharmacists from undertaking new roles, especially concerning vaccinations or hypertension or diabetes management, like in France. The deontology code in application in Côte d'Ivoire strengthens relationships with other healthcare professionals and extends its reach to veterinarians.

During French code of deontology<sup>10</sup> revision, significant differences between the two codes were observed, notably regarding the consideration of pharmacists from European Union countries practicing in France, the extension of respect for human life beyond death, and the pharmacist's right to use the internet for communication. However, in Côte d'Ivoire, no legislation governs the use of the internet and social media by pharmacists.

In France, prior to 2026, even though the use of social media was not explicitly included in the pharmaceutical code of ethics, professional ethics established limits on the digital communication of community pharmacists. "Digital communication must not become a means of soliciting customers"<sup>11</sup>.

However, the Ivorian pharmaceutical code of deontology is unique in its provisions regarding the pharmacist's role in promoting traditional medicines, thus adapting to local realities. Indeed, despite their widespread use by the population, only one local pharmaceutical company handles the repackaging of herbal medicines<sup>12</sup>.

The production of traditional medicines is part of the National Pharmaceutical Policy's strategies to support local pharmaceutical industry<sup>13</sup> development.

In Quebec, in an environment dominated by pharmacy chains, pharmacists' action must be guided by the interests of the population, independently of any financial pressures<sup>14</sup>.

Regarding Ivorian code of deontology future evolution, it is important to consider technological advancements and the increasingly common medicines online sale, even though this type of sale is not currently provided by the pharmaceutical regulations in application in Côte d'Ivoire.

## CONCLUSION

The Ivorian Pharmaceutical Deontology Code, adopted by law in 1962, has undergone significant changes, mainly through its restructuring with the adoption of Law No. 2015-534 of July 20, 2015, concerning Pharmaceutical Ethics Code. This restructuring was implemented to reflect the evolving pharmaceutical sector and the diverse areas of practice within the pharmaceutical profession. The Ivorian code of deontology has retained the fundamental principles of pharmaceutical practice while distinguishing itself from other codes of ethics, particularly the French deontology code, by including provisions related to medicines promotion derived from traditional pharmacopoeia. Nevertheless, certain aspects taken into account in the new code of ethics of France, such as the use of the

internet for communication by pharmacists and the performance of certain acts in pharmacies, must benefit from a regulatory framework during Côte d'Ivoire code of ethics revision in order to promote the practice of the pharmaceutical profession which takes into account the evolutions of society and the profession.

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