

A Word in your ear



The Pharmacy Council recently sent out a survey to pharmacist's assistants and pharmacists. The intention was to find out what you thought about the training you had

received, and also to investigate what pharmacists thought about the value that you add to their pharmacy.

I thought it would be interesting to have a look at what you said about your training and your job, and to share it with you.

Does your tutor support you?

The first thing I noticed (with relief, I can tell you) is that most people received adequate support from their tutors, and almost half had received a great deal of support. There were people, however, who felt that their tutors didn't spend enough time with them, and that some of them should be taught how to teach.

What do you need more training in?

In addition to computer skills, two areas were repeatedly mentioned – computer skills, pharmacology and patient counselling. When I looked at how pharmacist's assistants spend their working day, I realised why. Only 6.16% of those who participated worked in industry or wholesale. The rest worked in community (35.38%), private hospital (7.69%) or public hospital/institutional (44.62%) pharmacies, with 1.54% working under indirect supervision in primary health care clinics. What do they do with their time? Most of them assist with dispensing, advise patients on their medicines and health issues, and in community pharmacy, they sell Schedule 1 and 2 medicines daily.

Do you enjoy your job?

Thank goodness 75% of pharmacist's assistants enjoy

their jobs a great deal! Only 4.62% don't enjoy their jobs, and I guess these are the same people who wouldn't recommend it to someone looking for a job. 69% would definitely recommend it, and the rest say that they might recommend it, which is really not bad.

And what do pharmacists say about you?

You may be surprised to hear that your pharmacists actually appreciate you! Some of the comments from them:

- "We couldn't do without them."
- "They have a huge impact on service delivery."
- "They speed up the process of dispensing the medicines, which enables better patient care."
- "In a very busy pharmacy, he/she is a valuable part of the team to promote fast efficient service and decreasing waiting time."

Interview skills

If you've been around a while, you'll notice that we've reprinted the article on interview skills. We've done this because it fits so well with the CV writing that we spoke about in the last issue of *SAPA*. It's all part of the process of finding a job that suits you. So my advice to the 4.62% of pharmacist's assistants who told us that they don't enjoy their jobs is to polish their CV and start looking for another job in pharmacy. Luckily there's a lot of scope – different pharmacies (and different pharmacists) will offer new challenges and new opportunities. Go for it! And when you get that interview, remember that it's your opportunity to speak about a subject in which you are the expert – yourself!

End of another year

I hope that this year has treated you well, and that you will be able to spend quality time with your loved ones as the year draws to a close.

Lorraine Osman