

Challenges faced by part-time female hospital pharmacists

Joyce Yeap¹ and Karlee Johnston²

¹Pharmacy Department, Calvary Public Hospital Bruce

²Australian National University



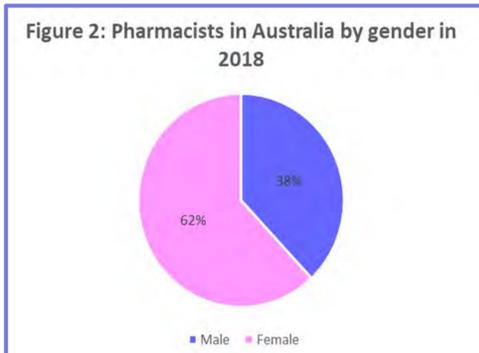
GENDER DIFFERENTIATION IN PHARMACY

Pharmacy has traditionally comprised of mainly female employees, which is consistent throughout all areas within pharmacy, with approximately a third of the workforce working part-time.¹



GENDER IMBALANCE IN PHARMACY LEADERSHIP?

Despite the relatively high number of female pharmacists, a significant gender gap exists in pharmacy leadership positions.² This is consistent with findings from the World Economic Forum's global gender gap report in 2018 – Australia was ranked 39th for gender equality due to a reduction in females as legislators, senior officials and managers, and a slight increase in the gender pay gap².



PERSONAL STORY

I was an infectious diseases clinical pharmacist who migrated to Australia in 2014 and had to restart my career as an intern pharmacist. After re-joining the Australian hospital setting as a registered pharmacist, I was looking to progress to the role of a senior pharmacist.



However, following maternity leave, I converted from full-time to part-time employment to manage work / family life balance. While the transition has allowed me to care for my family while maintaining my professional skills, it has been challenging to set sights on advancing my career.

WHAT DOES THIS LOOK LIKE IN PRACTICE



Even in our hospital, a quarter of the workforce are part-timers - all of them female pharmacists - with many also on maternity leave. Interestingly, 4 out of 6 of our management staff are females, with three of them working part-time.

The need or desire for pharmacists to work part-time, particularly after maternity leave may present a barrier to career progression for many female pharmacists and be contributing to the gender imbalance at senior pharmacist and management positions.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES OF PART-TIME WORKERS

Benefits of part-time pharmacists	Challenges of part-time pharmacists
Often mid-career, experienced and valued members of the workforce.	Due to challenges with rostering, usually placed in back-fill and covering roles
Generally efficient and hard-working members of the team	Limited capacity to work in a single area to build rapport and feel connected with team
Often take on a nurturing and supportive role in the team due to experience	Limited ability to consolidate specialist clinical knowledge and gain job recognition

The ability to find value in work and feel connected with the team and recognised are key contributors to a sense of job satisfaction, according to the National Skills Commission.

WHAT CAN WE DO?

We need to better understand the experience of part-time pharmacists and their influence on the workplace. It is important to investigate rates of attrition of part-time pharmacists, job satisfaction, and understand barriers to longevity and career progression in the workplace through further research.



If you are working part-time and interested in taking part in our research on the experiences of part-time pharmacists, scan the adjacent QR code and we will contact you soon.

REFERENCES

- National Skills Commission. Statistical overview on hospital pharmacists [Image on internet]. 2021 [updated 2021 September 10; cited 2022 November 9]. Available from: <https://labourmarketinsights.gov.au/occupation-profile/Hospital-Pharmacists?occupationCode=251511>
- Martin A, Naunton M, Peterson GM. Gender balance in pharmacy leadership: Are we making progress? Res. Social Adm. Pharm. 2021 April;17(4):694-700.