

# Identifying and delineating advanced practice of technicians - Results of a national survey and cluster analysis.

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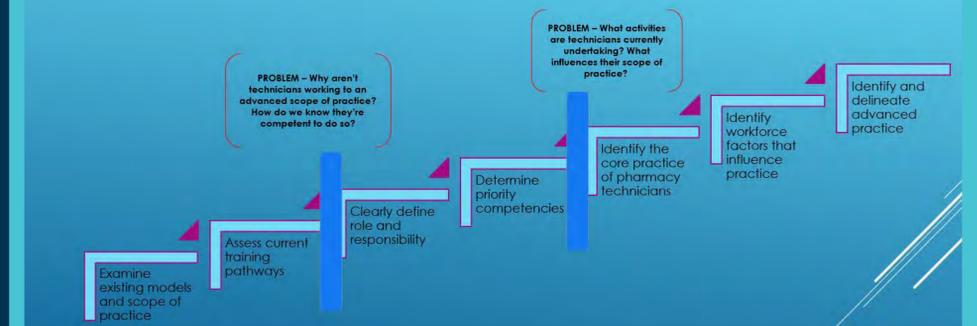
What technicians *should* be doing

What technicians *are* doing

How do we support the development of an advancing scope of practice?

**Aim/Objective** - The aim of this research was to identify and delineate the current practice of advanced-scope technicians. This was supported by objectives: 1. Define the roles and activities that technicians are currently undertaking 2. Compare the extent of advanced-scope activity according demographic factors and workforce variables.

## Background – What are technicians doing and how can we best support them?



**Methods** - A quantitative survey was designed to test 88 activities/responsibilities within five practice domains. A two-step cluster analysis was completed for each domain and the model outcome was assessed in relation to cluster number, quality, size, predictor importance and cluster comparison.

## Results and Discussion –

By assessing the model outcomes, the predictor importance variables and comparatively reviewing the 2 identified clusters within each domain, a list of 25 advanced scope activities was identified and delineated from the survey results. For hospital technicians, workforce variables such as qualifications, experience, employment grade had no impact on their participation in advanced scope activities.

Screen medicine orders for compliance with legal and local requirements and rectify non-compliant orders appropriately.	Screen rewritten, non-automated orders for transcription accuracy and refer appropriately if errors are identified.	Screen medication orders, identify duplicate orders and refer appropriately.	Identify fraudulent prescriptions and requests for medications and refer as required.	Identify requests for medications (both prescription and/or over the counter) that may be outside legal requirements and refer appropriately.	Provide patient-specific basic medicines information to community health providers
Communicate with external health professionals to obtain information for a patient medicines list	Identify patients requiring communication with other health professionals and assist in preparing and communicating information after pharmacist review	Identify patient who have not had a medicine allergy or adverse drug reaction (ADR) confirmed or documented and refer appropriately	Assist in preparing information for transfer of care to another healthcare provider	Initiate and document a best possible medication history for a pharmacist to review	Using a checklist or similar, identify patients that are at high risk of medicine related problems and refer to a pharmacist
Using clinical or non-clinical guidelines identify patients that are at high-risk of a medicine related problem and refer appropriately	Screen patient information for medication related information for pharmacist review (e.g. non-adherence, overdose, underdose)	Identify patients who are prescribed medicines requiring therapeutic drug monitoring for pharmacist review	Participate in strategic planning for the business, service or department	Provide leadership in the development, implementation, and evaluation of standards of practice, policies and/or procedures	Contribute to or facilitates recruitment and retention activities within your team
Take responsibility for the rostering or allocation within your team	Contribute to or facilitates performance and development conversations with other pharmacy technicians	Participate in pharmacy quality improvement activities, including collection and response to feedback, implementation and assessment of improvement activities and their outcomes	Lead pharmacy quality improvement activities, including collection and response to feedback, implementation and assessment of improvement activities and their outcomes	Evaluate education and training programs and recommend revisions as needed	Serve as educator and clinical preceptor for students, staff and/or others

Assist staff in the development plan and suggest relevant training and/or learning opportunities

DOMAINS OF PRACTICE	Very great extent	Great extent	Some extent	Little extent	Not at all
<b>Domain 1: Professional and Ethical Practice:</b> This domain includes activities that address the ethical and professional responsibilities of pharmacy technicians. It encompasses the responsibility of technicians to maintain and uphold standards of behaviour and professional practice, including those imposed on the broader pharmacy service through legislation.					
<b>Domain 2: Communication and Collaboration:</b> This domain includes activities that are required to communicate effectively with patients and colleagues, and to build cooperative relationships within the healthcare team. Communication and collaboration also occur in circumstances where communication style must be adapted.					
<b>Domain 3: Medicines Management and Contribution to Patient Care:</b> Practice in this domain includes activities required for accurate and timely supply of medicines. It includes activities which focus on the specific needs of patients/consumers, care coordination and delivery. The medicines management focus also includes activities that will assist patients in optimising their use of medicines.					
<b>Domain 4: Leadership and Management:</b> This domain describes activities and attributes that ensure effective and efficient delivery of pharmacy services. These activities promote pharmacy businesses to contribute to business planning, resource management and role advocacy. It includes setting directions and modelling standards towards optimising pharmacy services and patient outcomes.					
<b>Domain 5: Evaluation and Education:</b> These are activities that involve pharmacy technicians seeking and analysing information to contribute to and improve quality use of medicines. This also includes contribution to the professional development of other staff in either a formal or informal capacity.					

**Conclusion** – Australian Pharmacy technicians ARE working in an advanced scope capacity, and it has been possible identify tasks that they are undertaking in this practice scope. Despite advocacy work to date, workforce variables such as qualifications did not define their scope of practice. Instead, if a Pharmacy technician is participating in one advanced scope activity, they are more likely to be participating in others. By identifying what technicians are currently doing, it is possible to prioritise a competency framework to continue to support Australian hospital pharmacy technicians.