

The Pharmacy Practice Research Trust



Press release: for immediate use

Career and promotion prospects biggest influence for pre-reg students

A new research report published by the Pharmacy Practice Research Trust (PPRT) which investigates pre-registration choices of pharmacy graduates shows that future career and promotion prospects were the major motivators in choosing a training post, influencing 86.4% of participants. In addition, passing the registration exam – or getting into the profession - strongly determined the largest proportion of the cohort's pre-registration decision-making (65%).

The results of this cohort study of pharmacy careers found that around two thirds of respondents had found it easy to secure their pre-registration post. Nearly three quarters of respondents were female, suggesting that the trend of progressive entry of women into the profession will continue and just under a half were from minority ethnic groups. This figure provides further evidence that the profession is set to become increasingly ethnically diverse comment the authors Sarah Willis and Professor Karen Hassell.

Overall, 42% of respondents had secured a training post in hospital pharmacy and 55.7% in community pharmacy. However, males and minority ethnic

....2

students were over-represented amongst those training in community pharmacy which reflects the existing occupational segregation within the profession. This segregation was further reflected in the long term career intentions which indicated that they were significantly related to the type of pre-registration post secured. A large proportion of the cohort were highly committed to working hard whatever pharmacy career they had and nearly 70% stated that they saw pharmacy as a career until they retired. When asked about preferences for working post registration, more than three-quarters who had a hospital based training post intended to work in the same sector and nearly 80% who had secured a community based training post hoped to stay in that sector of the profession. Respondents were also asked what sector of pharmacy practice they did not want to work in; the highest response was 'industry' but academia was also a frequent response.

The majority of graduates taking part in the survey felt that the MPharm devoted the right amount of time to the pharmaceutical sciences (67.5%) and that clinical pharmacy and practice subjects should be taught in all years of the course (87.0%). However, many also believed that undergraduate pharmacy education does not join up well with pre-registration training.

This study represents the sixth report in a Longitudinal Cohort Study of Pharmacy Careers undertaken by Sarah Willis and Professor Karen Hassell of the Centre for Pharmacy Workforce Studies, University of Manchester School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences which follows 2006 graduates through career stages from student to registration.

"Our results showed that large proportions of the students surveyed were highly committed to a career in pharmacy" said Sarah Willis who prepared the report,

“but we were concerned about the lack of interest amongst the cohort in working in academia.”

“The Trust is pleased to see this report – which is just one of a series. The full study is due to complete in 2009 and will provide the profession with a comprehensive overview of career motivators and influencing factors which will be of great interest to educators, pre-registration employers and ultimately workforce planning as a whole” said Dr Sue Ambler, Trust Director.

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Monday, 7 January 2008 direct tel: 07774 650 391

Notes to editors:

1. *From pharmacy education into pre-registration training: views of final year MPharm students on their undergraduate programme and its influences on their career decision-making. A longitudinal cohort study of pharmacy careers; pre-registration choices questionnaire. Report 6: analysis of the questionnaire.*

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<http://www.rpsgb.org/informationresources/downloadsocietypublications/>

2. Background

The second survey for A Longitudinal Cohort Study about Pharmacy Careers was undertaken in March 2006. The survey – the Pre-Registration Choices questionnaire – had an explicit focus on respondents' pre-registration choices and sought to frame reasons for these choices in terms of contextual variables such as learning experiences and exposure to different aspects and sectors of pharmacy practice as an undergraduate. The survey also collected data about respondents' early career intentions, expected patterns of work, and intentions to take career breaks, together with attitudinal data exploring respondents' conceptualisation of a career in pharmacy and their beliefs about working as a pharmacist.

As with the first survey for the study, the Pre-Registration Choices survey was piloted with a sample of 2004 pharmacy graduates (n=400). It was administered to the 2006 cohort initially via a visit from members of the research team to each individual school of pharmacy, and non-respondents were followed up with postal reminders. Only students paying 'home' fees were invited to complete the Pre-Registration Choices survey (which means that students from European Economic Areas and Switzerland are included – although the vast majority of EEA students taking part in the cohort study are from the Republic of Ireland).

The response rate across all participating schools of pharmacy (n=14) to the survey was 68.1%, slightly higher than the overall response rate achieved with the Early Choices survey (which 66.5% of the cohort completed).

3. Background to the Pharmacy Practice Research Trust

The Pharmacy Practice Trust was established in July 1999 as an independent research charity with a broad objective to promote and develop the field of pharmacy practice research. Its trustees are drawn from senior health policy makers, leading academics, industrialists and retailers. For further information email: practiceresearch@rpsgb.org

4. Funding

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