



Quantitative and qualitative research to identify the professional and personal support needs and future careers of NSW rural and metropolitan hospital pharmacy graduates



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A validated questionnaire was given to 105 current or recent hospital pharmacy graduates in NSW hospitals and 51 responses were received. Sixteen current or recent graduates were interviewed and 12 Directors of Pharmacy were interviewed. The findings mostly supported the literature, but also added much new information to the scant world literature on this topic.

Being given a structured training programme and a performance plan were very important for graduates and most reported that they did not receive these. Although graduates were satisfied with many aspects, most were not satisfied overall with the training and support they received.

Some graduates need help with accommodation, transport and developing local support networks when they move to a new area. Most graduates did feel personally supported by their department although some did not and this is a concern.

The vast majority of hospital pharmacy graduates wish to remain in hospital pharmacy and look forward to the training and professional development aspects of being a hospital pharmacist. The majority of reasons for remaining or leaving are professionally focused with training, range of experience and professional improvement being the main motivations. Personal factors are also influential. Rural background strongly influences graduates to remain in rural areas.

Pay is invariably a low priority factor for health care professionals' retention according to the literature. However in the case of hospital pharmacy graduates, it is the key trigger for them to leave for work in community pharmacy.

Meeting the needs of graduates demands significant resources in terms of skills and time. The importance is not underestimated by Directors of Pharmacy, however their competing priorities makes this very difficult in the current funding climate.

For the full report on this project visit our website, follow the link to the Rural Research Capacity Building Program and click on 'view completed projects'

Margaret Hewetson was previously Director of Pharmacy at Lismore Base Hospital. Her interests are HR oriented and particularly in identifying the important recruitment and retention factors for pharmacists in rural areas in order to build the department. Previously she worked in UK as Director of Medicines Information for London and South East England. In that position she worked with NHS Direct the 24 hour nurse-led health helpline and led the development of the NHS National electronic Library for Medicines www.nelm.nhs.uk



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