



Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Currents in Pharmacy Teaching and Learning

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/cptl

Research Paper

The satisfaction and perception of Provisionally Registered Pharmacists (PRP) towards their internship training in the Ministry of Health, Malaysia facilities: A national survey

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ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Job satisfaction
 Pharmacy internship
 Pharmacist

ABSTRACT

Background: The pharmacy internship program is designed to provide comprehensive training for interns to perform various roles in pharmacy practice. In Malaysia, the current internship program has been in place since 2004 in public health facilities, but has never been extensively evaluated.

Aim: To assess the level of job satisfaction and perception of Provisionally Registered Pharmacists (PRP) towards the internship training provided.

Methods: A cross-sectional nationwide survey was conducted amongst all PRPs undergoing training between December 2015 and February 2016 to assess their level of job satisfaction and perception towards the training requirements stipulated by the Pharmacy Board of Malaysia.

Results: A total of 733 PRPs participated in the survey and the response rate was 95.8%. On the basis of the response received, 92.5% (n = 678) felt that the one year training period was 'just nice', 30.5% (n = 223) felt that the logbooks were 'too complicated', and 33.2% (n = 241) said the targets set by the Pharmacy Board of Malaysia were 'too high'. On a scale of 1 to 5, respondents rated 3.32 (SD 0.54) for mean score of job satisfaction. Significant factors influencing mean score of job satisfaction were: perceived fairness at the work place; perceived self-competence after one year of training; preceptors' competence; and pharmacy as a chosen career pathway.

Conclusion: Intern pharmacists were fairly satisfied with the internship training in government

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<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cptl.2018.04.005>

Received 4 April 2017; Received in revised form 22 January 2018; Accepted 2 April 2018

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facilities in the Ministry of Health, Malaysia. A review of the internship logbooks and the practicality of targets set by the Pharmacy Board warrant further improvement.

Introduction

In Malaysia, the pharmacy internship is a comprehensive post-graduation training program developed by the Pharmacy Board of Malaysia that exposes the interns to various areas of pharmacy practice in the real-world setting through hands-on training modules. The one year internship program comprises structured modules with clearly defined requirements which each pharmacist intern, also known as a Provisionally Registered Pharmacist (PRP) needs to fulfill in order to qualify for registration as a full-fledged pharmacist.¹ The PRPs are required to acquire experience from the internship program and fulfill a set of requirements in accordance with the standards set out by the Pharmacy Board of Malaysia.²

The Pharmacy Board of Malaysia had enumerated a list of training centers that are approved for conducting pharmacy internship training. Graduates of a pharmacy degree program recognized by the Pharmacy Board, Malaysia, are required to undergo one year of training as a PRP in any of the approved public/private sector facilities before being registered as a Fully Registered Pharmacist (FRP) in Malaysia. Malaysia enjoys a fairly comprehensive range of health services provided by a dual healthcare provider; from the public and private sector. Despite the dual system in healthcare provision, the majority of the training centers for pharmacy internship training are provided by the public sector, which consists of government hospitals in the Ministry of Health (MOH), teaching hospitals under the Ministry of Education, and army hospitals under the Ministry of Defense. In 2012, the MOH had liberalized the list of internship training, which includes private community pharmacies, private hospitals and manufacturing premises. From then onwards, newly graduated pharmacists could choose to undergo a one year internship in any of the listed training facilities, public or private sector, which are recognized by the Pharmacy Board of Malaysia.

The set requirements for the internship training in the public sector differ from the private sector due to the difference in nature of business. To develop well-rounded pharmacists with a level of professionalism, as many as nine pharmacy activities have been incorporated into the one year internship training in government hospitals in the public sector.² The PRPs are required to acquire experience from these pharmacy activities and fulfill the requirements in accordance with the standards set out by the Pharmacy Board of Malaysia. Standardized logbooks with specific requirements were given to PRPs to record the pharmacy activities they had performed during each rotation.² For instance, they must complete six compulsory pharmacy activities such as Ward Pharmacy Practice, Out-patient Pharmacy Services, In-patient Pharmacy Services, Drugs and Poisons Information Services, Manufacturing and Prepacking. On the other hand, three other pharmacy activities namely Clinical Pharmacokinetic Services, Parenteral Nutrition/ Intravenous Additive Services, and Oncology Pharmacy Services are optional since not all government hospitals provided these services.

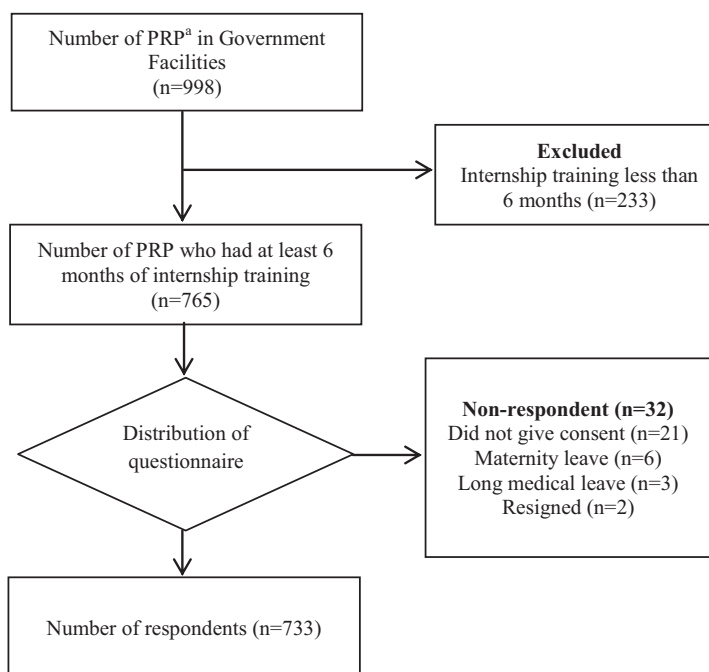


Fig. 1. Sampling method employed in this study. A total number of 733 PRPs responded.

^aProvisionally Registered Pharmacist.

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