



Research

Key determinants of satisfaction with residency of hospital pharmacy specialists in Spain

Hector Mateo-Carrasco, PharmD, PhD, MRPharmS*,
Emilio Molina-Cuadrado, PharmD, BCPS, Pablo Nieto-Guindo, PharmD

Pharmacy Department, Torrecardenas Hospital, Almeria, Spain

Abstract

Background: No study thus far has focused on assessing factors affecting satisfaction with hospital pharmacy residency training. Elucidating these factors might help improve satisfaction levels and, ultimately, affect quality of care.

Objectives: Primary objectives were assessing the impact that institutional, organizational, educational, and current employment factors have on the satisfaction of Spanish hospital pharmacy residents. Secondary objectives were to identify areas for improvement, professional prospects, and work experience afterwards.

Methods: A cross-sectional survey was sent to Spanish health-system pharmacists who had completed their hospital training between 2009 and 2012. Pearson's chi-square, Spearman's correlation, and Mann–Whitney's tests were used for categorical, ordinal, and non-parametric quantitative variables, respectively.

Results: Of 506 forms, 162 were returned (32.01%). Residency satisfaction was scored at 3.24 ± 0.69 out of 5 and was affected by the following factors: compliance with rotation calendar ($\rho = 0.711, p < 0.001$), number of residents at the site ($\rho = 0.38, p < 0.001$), participation in international rotations ($\rho = 0.185, p = 0.018$), in-pharmacy educational activities ($\rho = 0.181, p = 0.021$), and scientific events attended ($\rho = 0.156, p = 0.047$). Moreover, a relationship between residency satisfaction and post-residency employability was found ($\rho = -0.519, p < 0.001$, for time worked in non-hospital pharmacy roles, and $\rho = 0.197, p = 0.05$, for time worked in hospital pharmacy roles). Involvement in clinical activities (17.9%) and resourcefulness/troubleshooting (45%) were the lowest- and highest-valued areas, respectively.

Conclusion: Spanish pharmacists were moderately satisfied with their hospital residency. The degree of compliance with the rotation calendar had the largest impact on satisfaction. Other factors also affecting satisfaction included the following: employability after residency, number of residents in the institution, in-pharmacy educational activities, scientific events attended, and international experiences.

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Introduction

Job satisfaction in hospital pharmacy has been a ubiquitous issue since the early 1980s.¹ However, very limited data on satisfaction of hospital pharmacists during their

residency training exist. Low levels of job satisfaction have been associated with poor motivation and performance, which ultimately might affect the quality of care, but results from various studies are somewhat contradictory.^{1–4} Statistically significant relationships between job satisfaction and several demographic and work-related factors such as tasks performed, hours worked, income, and job positions have been reported.^{5–12} Some research also suggests that job satisfaction for pharmacists increased as the percentage of time engaged in clinical activities increased.^{13–15} These

* Corresponding author: Hector Mateo-Carrasco, PharmD, PhD, MRPharmS, Pharmacy Department, Torrecardenas Hospital, Hermandad de Donantes de Sangre S/N, 04009 Almeria, Spain.

E-mail: hector.mateo.mir@juntadeandalucia.es

studies were not easily comparable, though, since very diverse environments were surveyed and different methods for measuring satisfaction were used. As a result, it is difficult to establish a consensus on the relative influence of these and other determinants on job satisfaction from the existing literature.¹⁰ The access to the public healthcare system, the status and duties of hospital pharmacists, and the global financial and resource-constrained situation in Spain must be taken into consideration as well.

The primary objectives of this study were (1) to measure residency satisfaction of last generations of Spanish health-system pharmacists and (2) to identify institutional, organizational, educational, and current employment determinants of satisfaction. Elucidating such factors may help to develop strategies to improve satisfaction levels. The secondary objectives were (3) recognizing areas for improvement in residency programs and (4) measuring professional opportunities and work experience of young specialists after residency.

Setting

In Spain, pharmacy specialization is a post-graduate education achieved through a residency period in accredited public institutions. It is accessed by pharmacy graduates via a nationwide official examination and further center and specialty selection is based on the candidate's qualifications. There are currently seven specialties that have been recognized: hospital pharmacy, clinical and laboratory analysis, clinical biochemistry, microbiology and parasitology, radiopharmacy, industrial pharmacy, and immunology. The hospital pharmacy specialization consists of a four-year structured training program including in-pharmacy and ward-based rotations through different areas of exposure. In-pharmacy rotations generally include the following: inpatient and outpatient validation and dispensing, electronic prescribing, unit-dose-drug distribution, drug information center, oncematology, cytostatic and aseptic preparations, adult and pediatric nutrition, administrative pharmacy and stock management, pharmacokinetics, and clinical trials, among others. Ward-based clinical rotations occur primarily during the last year of training and focus on the residents' particular interests, but no further sub-specialization is achieved. Institutions must adhere to the Ministry of Health's approved guidelines when tailoring residency programs, but the order and length of rotations may vary according to particular departmental and personal needs or interests. Upon completion, residents are awarded the Degree of Specialist in Hospital Pharmacy, which is mandatory to work as a pharmacist in public institutions within the national territory and is recognized in most European countries. Hospital pharmacists are regarded with the same status as other medical specialties, and their salary is established by law and paid by the regional or autonomic authorities.¹⁶ They have higher qualifications, honoraria, and a more patient-oriented role than community-based pharmacists, which has been ultimately associated with higher rates of job satisfaction.¹⁷

Material and methods

Instrument preparation and administration

A multi-center, cross-sectional survey of all Spanish hospital pharmacists who completed their residency between May 2009 and May 2012 was conducted during May and April 2012. The timeframe was selected based on the assumption that individuals belonging to the last generations were more susceptible to impairment of the working conditions than older (and presumably more stable) generations. The mailing list from the Spanish Society of Hospital Pharmacy (SEFH) was used as a directory of potential respondents. A previously validated survey that measured pharmacists' job satisfaction was modified to better meet the purpose and theoretical framework of this study.¹⁸ Additional items were included based on a review of relevant literature and feedback from a pilot test with 13 residents, who were randomly shortlisted from the aforementioned mailing list.^{2-4,6-12} The pilot test also aimed to evaluate the wording of the items and amendments were made for clarity. Straightforward enquiries and minimal time required for completion were essential in order to maximize the response rate. Thus, assuming 90% of individuals scored three (adequate) or higher and a dropout rate of 10%, it was calculated that a minimum of 155 individuals were required to obtain a confidence interval of 95%. E-mail surveys were the method of choice because they allowed fast, cost-free, and optimal distribution of the questionnaire. Approval by the Institutional Review Board was obtained. The names and affiliations of respondents remained anonymous throughout the entire process. Instructions on how to complete and submit the questionnaire were provided as an attachment in the recruitment e-mail and at the top of the questionnaire. The survey took approximately 15 minutes to complete. Two further reminders (at days 14 and 21) were e-mailed in order to improve response rate. The study was closed one month after the last reminder e-mail was sent.

We screened the scientific literature in search of previous publications on residency satisfaction using MEDLINE® (last access on July 20, 2013). Simple and advanced searches were conducted using different combinations of the MeSH terms: [INTERNSHIP AND RESIDENCY] and/or [PHARMACY] and/or [SATISFACTION]. Terms such as [RESIDENCY, NONMEDICAL], [PHARMACY, HOSPITAL], [PHARMACY, COMMUNITY], and [JOB SATISFACTION] were used as alternatives. Citations were cross referenced for additional literature.

Measurements

The questionnaire included a set of 28 open- and closed-ended queries (items) designed to cover a large number of variables. No data concerning age or gender of participants were collected. The questionnaire was structured in three sections. Section 1 (22 items, to be completed by all the

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