

Hospital Pharmacy: Management

Background

Hospital pharmacy management is a promising career option for pharmacists who enjoy the challenges presented by administrative work in an institutional setting. Hospital pharmacy managers oversee the operations of pharmacy departments and are responsible for the department's professional and administrative components. They ensure that quality pharmaceutical services are provided according to accreditation and professional standards.

There are a number of positions and responsibilities that fall in the purview of hospital pharmacy management. It is sometimes split between technician staff management and pharmacist staff management. Many hospitals employ a pharmacist in the role of clinical coordinator to track therapy utilization within the institution. Typically, the Director of Pharmacy is in charge of the overall department within the hospital. Depending on the particular hospital organization, all of these duties will be distributed in accord with the needs of the facility. As one respondent from California indicated, "There are challenges in helping others [patients and professionals]."

The pharmacy is often in charge of negotiating with wholesalers and manufacturers to get the best price on medications. Acquisition of various equipment and technologies to facilitate the workflow of the pharmacy (e.g., sterile hoods for intravenous preparations, automatic dispensing machines to use at the units in the hospital) is also included as part of this pharmacy responsibility.

With the expanded focus on drug therapy, cost containment, and quality control, hospital pharmacy managers have a much higher profile within their organizations. The cost of prescription medications has been steadily rising over the past 10 to 15 years and a greater portion of a hospital's budget is now spent on medications. Furthermore, pharmacists' salaries are also increasing. Consequently, a manager has a large responsibility to control costs and guarantee the efficient and effective operation of the pharmacy. A Connecticut respondent indicated the importance of "working with other health care professionals," which helps support the pharmacy team.

In addition, hospital pharmacy managers are at the forefront of work on e-prescribing, electronic medical records, and other continuity of care initiatives.

A respondent from Tennessee summed up the diversity of the position as "evaluating complex drug therapies only given in [a] hospital setting; working on projects that have broad institutional impact that improve patient care across the hospital; and working with multiple health care professionals."

Twenty-three percent of a manager's time is spent on business/department management tasks. An additional 13% of their time is spent on patient care services. Three other areas each require 9% of their time: data management, personnel management, and service (committees and other activities).

Characteristics

Forty-nine hospital pharmacy managers responded to the 2007 *AphA Career Pathway Evaluation Program* survey. Eighty-two percent of respondents indicated having an entry-level pharmacy degree with 56% having a PharmD degree. Eight percent have an advanced degree such as an MA, MS, or MBA. Forty percent have completed a residency, 27% indicated they had been through certificate training, and 16% said they had completed some form of additional training.

The respondents' average age was 41 years old. Slightly over two thirds of the respondents (69%) were female. Annual income data indicate that 47% report an income between \$80,000–\$100,000. Thirty-seven percent earn more than \$100,000, with 2% earning more than \$170,000. Respondents represented 38 states.

The majority of respondents indicated that they were satisfied with their work, with 52% indicating “extremely satisfied” and 35% indicating “somewhat satisfied.” Respondents said that they felt the work was challenging, with 39% indicating “extremely challenging” and 51% indicating “somewhat challenging.” One respondent from Ohio summed up the challenge by stating, “There is always something new going on—new challenges, new technology, and new issues.” A New York respondent stated that hospital practice is “an environment that leads to daily challenges.”

Insider's Perspective

What aspects of the job are most appealing?

Two characteristics were chosen by respondents as the most appealing. Twenty-two percent of respondents said that interaction with people was the most appealing aspect of their work. This included interactions with other pharmacists, nurses, patients, and physicians. Fourteen percent indicated they enjoyed the challenges that the environment brings. Two other areas were both listed by 12% of the respondents: the variety of responsibilities and patient care. Compared with staff pharmacists, managers often have more predictable hours and they do not work as many weekends or “on call” hours as the pharmacy staff.

A respondent from North Carolina stated enjoyment of the “clinical questions, working on projects that come to fruition, and being a liaison for nurses and physicians.” Another from Pennsylvania stated that the “work environment including pharmacy peers, nursing, and physicians” is appealing. An Iowa respondent stated the environment is “challenging and provides a variety of responsibilities involved in a rural hospital setting.”

What aspects of the job are least appealing?

In a slight contrast to the most appealing aspects, 18% of respondents indicated that employee relations and the shortage of staff were the least appealing aspects of their role. Sixteen percent cited politics and bureaucracy. Another 14% indicated the workload and occasional long hours as other concerns.

A Washington, DC, respondent put it succinctly, “So much work, so little time!” A respondent from Indiana stated frustration in “doing the paperwork necessary for meeting

attendance; sometimes I put a lot of effort into this and I get about 2 minutes to cover all the issues.” Finally, a respondent from New York summed up concerns this way, “There are challenges paying attention to the administrative details of directing a large department.”

What advice should students and practitioners consider when selecting the option of hospital pharmacy management?

Students should consider the training required and workload associated with hospital pharmacy management when thinking about it as a career choice. When working in a hospital, it is important to continually update knowledge on new medications and therapy to provide the best care for patients at the most affordable level.

As with any management position, it is important to consider the degree of responsibilities required and the increased workload for managers. One respondent stated that a person must have the “ability to make decisions with incomplete data and time pressures and limited resources.” An Oregon respondent stated that “a hospital NEVER closes—it can be very rewarding work” but someone has to be there.

Critical Factor Ratings

Interaction With Patients

Working in the relative confines of the hospital organization, managers have limited contact with the general public and patients.

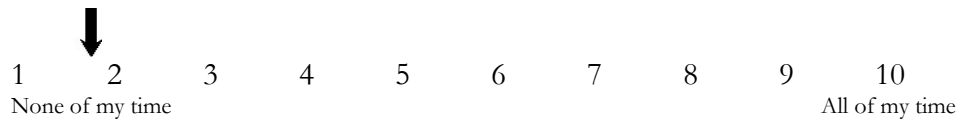
= 4.3
 $\sigma = 2.4$



Conducting Physical Assessments

Again, working in management, pharmacists in this position have little opportunity to be involved in physical assessments of patients. Respondents rated this factor the lowest for this profile.

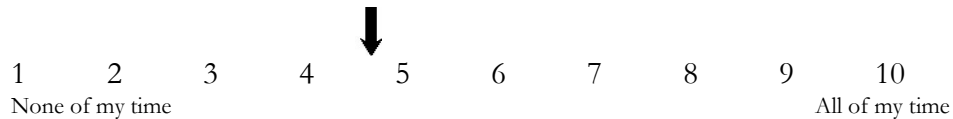
= 1.8
 $\sigma = 1.3$



Interpreting Laboratory Values

A manager does have a role in developing the therapy guidelines and medication formularies that will be used as the standards for therapy within the hospital and has access to laboratory values to help with this decision-making process.

= 4.7
 $\sigma = 2.6$



Continuity of Relationships

In response to the question, "To what degree do you have ongoing relationships with patients or consumers?" hospital managers gave a lower range score of 3.1. The majority of their interactions are with other hospital administrators and pharmacy staff, rather than with the hospital patients or the public.

= 3.1
 $\sigma = 2.6$



Helping People

Managers are mid-range in their response to having direct versus indirect effects on people. With their duties in cost-control, formulary, and therapy guideline development, they have an important role in the system that increases the quality of life for patients, but their impact is not as direct as for other health care providers.

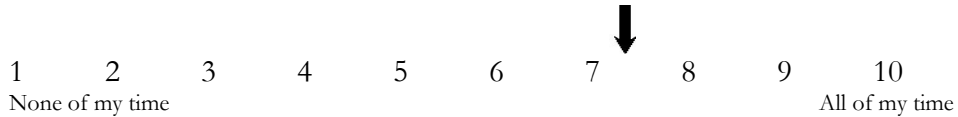
= 5.1
 $\sigma = 2.6$



Collaboration With Other Professionals

As an administrator or manager, a great deal of responsibility will be collaborating with other departments within the hospital, including nurses, physicians, and nutritionists, among others. This is critical to the functioning of the hospital as a whole collaborative unit.

= 7.3
 $\sigma = 1.8$



Educating Other Professionals

Managers will often coordinate continuing education components for the rest of the hospital concerning new therapies and the introduction of new medications. In addition, they may be involved with in-service training of other professionals.

= 5.8
 $\sigma = 2.3$



Variety of Daily Activities

Coordinating with pharmacy staff and other departments in the hospital necessitates that managers' daily tasks are variable. With many responsibilities (e.g., staff management, inventory control, equipment acquisition, therapy development) a manager must be an expert in many diverse areas.

= 7.0
 $\sigma = 2.4$



Multiple Task Handling

Multiple task handling is tied for the third-highest rating in the hospital pharmacy manager profile with an 8.2. Managers have the responsibility of making sure that everyone has the information and resources they need to get their work done.

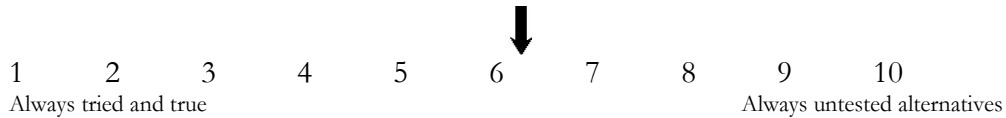
= 8.2
 $\sigma = 1.9$



Problem Solving

Although managers must handle many different tasks during their daily routine, they also indicated that these tasks, problems, and issues require untested or new solutions slightly more than using previously tested solutions. In these times of rising health care costs, managers are pressed to find new and more cost-effective ways to fulfill the duties of the pharmacy and the hospital goal of making patients well.

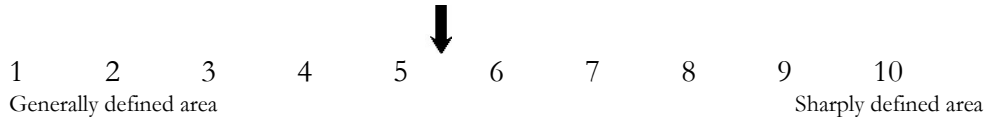
= 6.2
 $\sigma = 1.7$



Focus of Expertise

Rather than specializing in a single area of therapy or practice, a manager must be versed in all operation areas within the scope of the department. In many ways, a hospital pharmacy manager is a “Jack of all trades” and requires an understanding of the different needs of each specialty at the hospital. Whether it’s preparing intravenous medications or treating cancer patients, a manager must provide for those needs rather than focus on one specific area, as well as balance the general and sharply defined needs of practice.

= 5.4
 $\sigma = 2.5$



Innovative Thinking

In response to the question, “To what extent does your practice involve generating new ideas (innovative thinking) pertaining to pharmacy?” hospital pharmacy managers averaged a 7.3 rating indicating that their practice requires them to be more on the innovative side of the scale. Hospitals must always look for ways to control costs while still providing the best possible patient care.

= 7.3
 $\sigma = 1.9$



Applying Scientific Knowledge

Key to understanding all the needs of hospital patients, the utilization of scientific knowledge is crucial in planning and development in a hospital setting. It is important for the hospital pharmacy manager to be able to support ideas and solutions through scientifically sound decisions.

= 6.7
 $\sigma = 2.2$



Applying Medical Knowledge

The utilization of medical knowledge is also crucial in planning and development in a hospital setting. Taking into account the collaboration with other professionals in the hospital, the manager must apply medical knowledge to keep pharmacy aligned with all departments.

= 7.5
 $\sigma = 1.7$



Creating New Knowledge by Conducting Research

The opportunity to create new knowledge through research will vary from hospital to hospital. In a larger university hospital setting, there will be more opportunity and resources to conduct research. However, in smaller community hospitals, most of the pharmacy practice will involve using methods already proven in research.

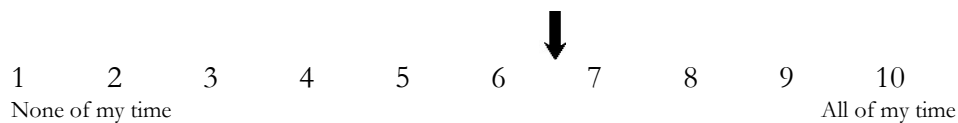
= 3.6
 $\sigma = 2.4$



Management/Supervision of Others

Not surprisingly, management and supervisory skills scored a 6.6 on the survey of hospital pharmacy managers. Properly managing staff, utilizing resources, and providing the best service for patients are constant concerns.

= 6.6
 $\sigma = 2.6$



Management/Supervision of a Business

Similar to the above factor, hospital managers are involved in some business oversight. However, as one department in a large organization, the management of the business side received a mid-range rating at 5.5. The issues here are cost control, billing, and the bottom line.

= 5.5
 $\sigma = 2.8$



Pressure/Stress

Any manager will agree that managers have added pressure or stress because more people depend on them for decision making and problem resolution. Respondents to this survey indicated that they tend toward having pressure or stress in their work.

= 6.7
 $\sigma = 2.1$



Work Schedule

Hospital managers feel that their schedule is more predictable. Typically, a manager's hours closely mirror standard business hours and there is less need to work weekends because most routine business is conducted during the week. Weekends and holidays generally require standard staffing support.

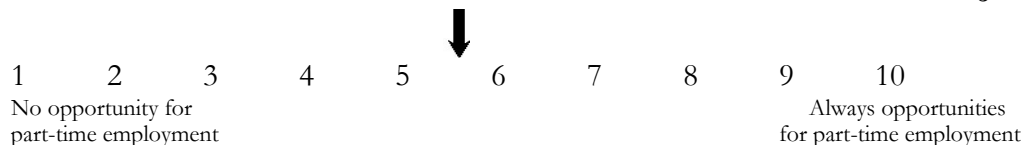
= 6.9
 $\sigma = 2.8$



Part-Time Opportunities

One of the greatest needs from management is consistency. Managers must be reliable and available for their staff. However, as the pharmacy staff grows, there can be a need for part-time managers to oversee specific aspects of the department. In larger hospitals that operate clinics, there may be some opportunity for managers of specialized therapies (e.g., an anticoagulation clinic) to work part-time.

= 5.6
 $\sigma = 3.4$



Job-Sharing Opportunities

There are limited job-sharing opportunities for hospital managers.

= 3.0
 $\sigma = 2.9$



Exit/Re-entry Opportunities

Opportunities do exist for exit/re-entry to the position. The difficulty is being able to stay at the same location.

= 4.9
 $\sigma = 3.2$



Parental Leave Opportunities

Hospitals are large organizations, and parental leave tends to be one of the benefits offered to employees.

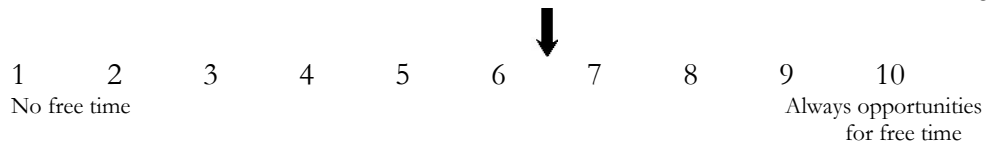
= 7.0
 $\sigma = 3.0$



Leisure/Family Time

Respondents to the survey indicated that despite the added responsibilities of management, they feel their practice still allows free time for leisure and family activities.

= 6.5
 $\sigma = 2.6$



Job Security

Hospital pharmacy managers reported they feel a good degree of security and stability in their positions. Although some areas have seen the closing of small hospitals, for the most part larger more efficient hospitals are expanding services.

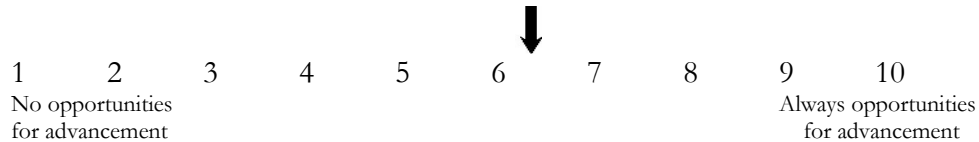
= 8.0
 $\sigma = 1.8$



Opportunities for Advancement

In hospital pharmacy, opportunities to advance could include becoming more specialized in a specific practice area, or moving up the ladder of hospital management and administration. The opportunity for either will increase in a larger hospital setting. The decision to make those advancements often depends on how involved the pharmacist wants to be in direct patient care. As individuals become more involved in management, the less likely they are to be directly involved with patients.

= 6.3
 $\sigma = 2.3$



Opportunities for Leadership Development

Leadership development scored a high mid-range 7.3 in this survey. Some will say that not every manager is a leader and not every leader is a manager, however a truly effective manager will be an effective leader. Managers must find ways to bring out the best in their staff and their department; leadership development is essential to their daily duties.

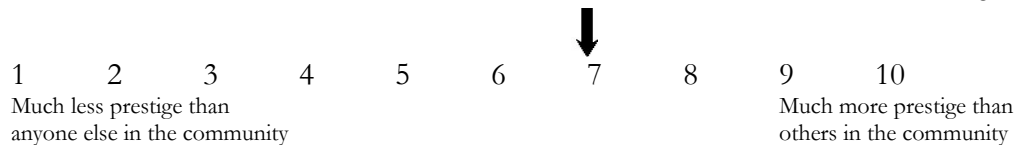
= 7.3
 $\sigma = 2.5$



Community Prestige

Especially in smaller community hospital settings, pharmacists often become well known in their community for the services they provide. Even outside of work, pharmacists are often approached by friends, family, and neighbors for advice and insight on health care. The hospital's standing in the community also can impact community prestige for the pharmacist.

= 6.9
 $\sigma = 2.0$



Professional Involvement

Professional involvement of individual pharmacists is critical to the development of the profession as a whole. Pharmacists need to communicate with each other for the profession to continue advancing toward providing optimal health care for the public. This is even more critical for pharmacy managers because it is one of the best ways to keep up to date with their colleagues and stay in touch with the new ideas in hospital pharmacy practice.

= 7.5
 $\sigma = 2.6$



Income

Once again, with the pharmacist shortage creating a higher demand in the job market, pharmacists are enjoying high salary rates. Hospitals continue to re-evaluate their salary packages. Respondents indicated a 7.2 rating for being properly compensated for their work.

= 7.2
 $\sigma = 2.5$



Benefits (vacation, health, retirement)

Often directly linked to income or salary, benefit packages may be more lucrative in management positions. Hospitals may offer more vacation time and travel to professional meetings as additional incentives for hiring managers. This factor is tied for the third-highest rating for this profile.

= 8.2
 $\sigma = 1.8$



Geographic Location

Hospital pharmacists expressed that they could practice anywhere in the country. This is, once again, a result of the high demand for pharmacists found throughout the nation and the existence of hospitals in most urban and rural locations.

= 7.2
 $\sigma = 3.2$



Autonomy

The nature of a managerial position requires that an individual be willing to make judgment calls and decisions on a daily basis. The 8.1 rating indicates that hospital pharmacy managers are allowed a relatively high degree of autonomy. Managers must be assertive when dealing with their staff and with health care professionals in other departments.

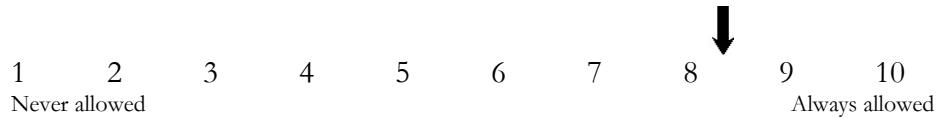
= 8.1
 $\sigma = 1.5$



Self-Worth

Hospital pharmacy managers report feeling a great deal of self-worth, rating this factor second highest in the profile at 8.3. These managers can gain a great sense of self-accomplishment helping to make critical decisions, working with other health care professionals, and making a difference in the operations of the pharmacy.

= 8.3
 $\sigma = 1.9$



Future Focus

Pharmaceutical manufacturers are constantly producing new medications, dosage forms, and medical devices. It is important for a manager to determine what the hospital will need in the future and how that will affect the pharmacy's operations and budget. New medications and technology may increase expense, but they also may improve effectiveness and efficiency; a manager must work to balance the two forces.

= 7.4
 $\sigma = 2.0$



Professional Prestige

Today, many individual hospitals are part of larger health systems that often include several hospitals, skilled nursing facilities, clinics, and other health sites. This allows managers to communicate regularly with professionals in other hospitals and affords the opportunity to develop a higher level of professional prestige within that group of hospitals and in the profession as a whole.

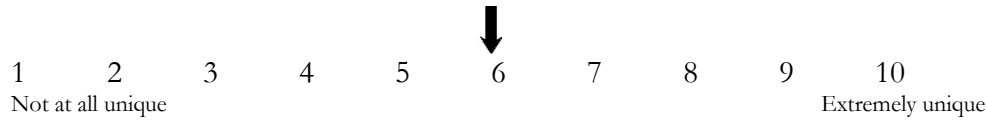
= 7.1
 $\sigma = 2.4$



Unique Practice Environment

Whether the hospital practice environment is unique depends greatly on the hospital's characteristics and how the pharmacy is laid out. In the classic, centralized pharmacy setting, there is not that much opportunity for unique practice approaches. However, in hospitals that employ satellite pharmacies, there is a chance for pharmacists to get much more involved with their patients and with other professionals.

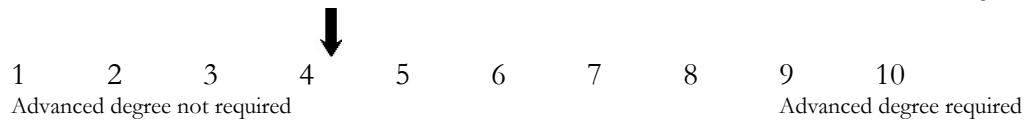
= 5.9
 $\sigma = 2.5$



Advanced Degree

The requirement of an advanced degree depends somewhat on the specific needs of the hospital administration as well as those of the pharmacy department. While there is no specific licensure requirement, some managers pursue advanced degrees.

= 4.2
 $\sigma = 3.5$



Entrepreneurial Opportunity

Since hospitals are typically large, publicly or privately owned organizations, there may not be much opportunity for individual entrepreneurship. However, some hospital pharmacies will outsource some needs (e.g., intravenous medication preparation) and this is where individual entrepreneurs may be able to play roles.

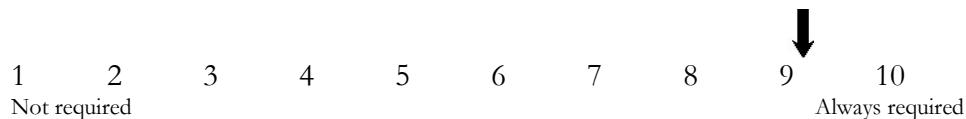
= 3.7
 $\sigma = 2.8$



Additional Training

Respondents rated this factor the highest in the profile. With the number of conditions, treatments, and technologies encountered in a hospital, managers must continually keep up with new trends, ideas, and methods. The hospital is a very natural venue for learning and adding to the hospital pharmacy manager's knowledge set.

= 9.1
 $\sigma = 1.6$



Interacting With Colleagues

Considering that this factor is one of the more appealing aspects described by participants, it is not surprising that they interact with colleagues often.

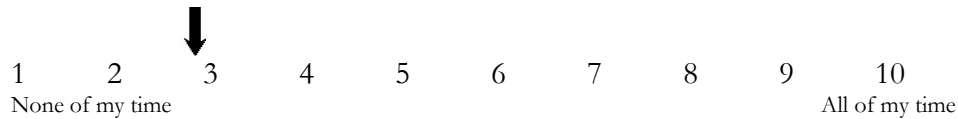
$$= 8.0$$
$$\sigma = 2.0$$



Travel

Travel is not a specific requirement for the day-to-day roles of hospital pharmacy managers. However, there is some opportunity to travel depending on the position at an individual hospital.

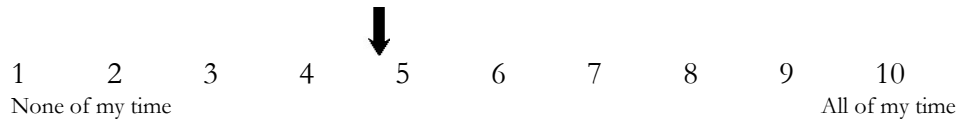
$$= 2.8$$
$$\sigma = 1.6$$



Writing

Respondents were mid-range in the amount of writing that they do. Perhaps the writing of reports, a necessity for the administration, enters into the picture for many of these pharmacists.

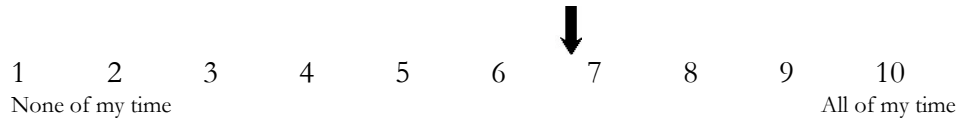
$$= 4.8$$
$$\sigma = 2.1$$



Working With Teams

Many management positions are based on interactions with others. Managers may be assigned to larger hospital teams as well as oversee department teams.

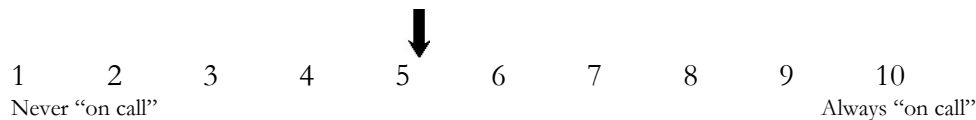
$$= 6.8$$
$$\sigma = 2.2$$



“On Call”

Not surprisingly, respondents indicated a mid-range level of “on call” status.

$$= 5.1$$
$$\sigma = 3.6$$



Work on Holidays

Most managers do not have to work many holidays, although with a rotation of pharmacists who do work holidays, a manager may take an occasional shift.

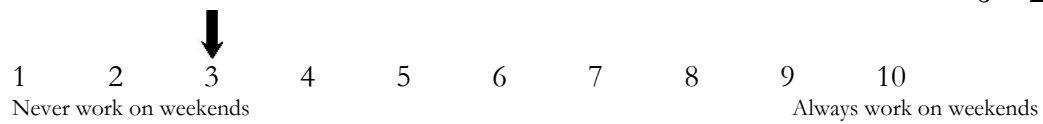
$$\begin{aligned} &= 3.2 \\ \sigma &= 2.6 \end{aligned}$$



Work on Weekends

Managers tend to work shifts when other administrators are available, therefore they have limited weekend hours.

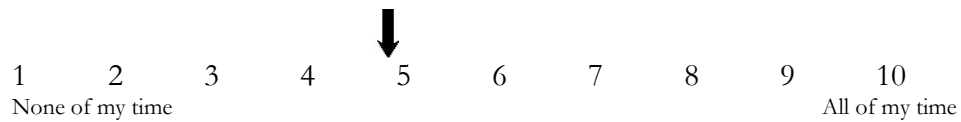
$$\begin{aligned} &= 3.0 \\ \sigma &= 2.5 \end{aligned}$$



Presentations

Respondents rated presentations at a 4.9, indicating that there are times when they give presentations but that this is a lower time commitment than other activities

$$\begin{aligned} &= 4.9 \\ \sigma &= 2.0 \end{aligned}$$



Mean Scores for Critical Factors

1. Interaction With Patients	4.3
2. Conducting Physical Assessments	1.8
3. Interpreting Laboratory Values	4.7
4. Continuity of Relationships	3.1
5. Helping People	5.1
6. Collaboration With Other Professionals	7.3
7. Educating Other Professionals	5.8
8. Variety of Daily Activities	7.0
9. Multiple Task Handling	8.2
10. Problem Solving	6.2
11. Focus of Expertise	5.4
12. Innovative Thinking	7.3
13. Applying Scientific Knowledge	6.7
14. Applying Medical Knowledge	7.5
15. Creating New Knowledge by Conducting Research	3.6
16. Management/Supervision of Others	6.6
17. Management/Supervision of a Business	5.5
18. Pressure/Stress	6.7
19. Work Schedule	6.9
20. Part-Time Opportunities	5.6
21. Job-Sharing Opportunities	3.0
22. Exit/Re-entry Opportunities	4.9
23. Parental Leave Opportunities	7.0
24. Leisure/Family Time	6.5
25. Job Security	8.0
26. Opportunities for Advancement	6.3
27. Opportunities for Leadership Development	7.3
28. Community Prestige	6.9
29. Professional Involvement	7.5
30. Income	7.2
31. Benefits (vacation, health, retirement)	8.2
32. Geographic Location	7.2
33. Autonomy	8.1
34. Self-Worth	8.3
35. Future Focus	7.4
36. Professional Prestige	7.1
37. Unique Practice Environment	5.9
38. Advanced Degree	4.2
39. Entrepreneurial Opportunity	3.7
40. Additional Training	9.1
41. Interacting With Colleagues	8.0
42. Travel	2.8
43. Writing	4.8
44. Working With Teams	6.8
45. "On Call"	5.1
46. Work on Holidays	3.2
47. Work on Weekends	3.0
48. Presentations	4.9

Reference

Schommer JC, Brown LM, Sogol EM. *Career Pathway Evaluation Program 2007 Pharmacist Profile Survey*. June 2007.

Professional Organizations

American Hospital Association (AHA)
One North Franklin, Chicago, IL 60606
Tel: 312-422-3000 Fax: 312-422-4796
www.aha.org

American Pharmacists Association (APhA)
1100 15th Street NW, Suite 400, Washington, DC 20005
Tel: 800-237-APhA Fax: 202-783-2351
www.pharmacist.com

American Society of Health-System Pharmacists (ASHP)
7272 Wisconsin Avenue, Bethesda, MD 20814
Tel: 301-657-3000
www.ashp.org

Board of Pharmaceutical Specialties (BPS)
1100 15th Street NW, Suite 400, Washington, DC 20005
Tel: 202-429-7591 Fax: 202-429-6304
www.bpsweb.org

National Pharmaceutical Association (NPhA)
107 Kilmayne Drive, Suite C, Cary, NC 27511
Tel: 800-944-NPhA Fax: 919-469-5870
www.npha.net

NOTE: For further pharmacy organization information, please visit the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy Web site at www.aacp.org and click on the “Related Pharmacy Organizations” link.