The University of Canberra – Global Pharmacy Support Workforce Survey

Friday the 8th March to Monday the 9th April 2012

Background

Effective and available medications are integral to healthcare. Adequately trained professionals are essential to efficiently procure, transport, store and supply medications. The characterisation of the Pharmacy Support Workforce is of great importance, particularly in low income countries where shortages of pharmacists mean other cadres have extended responsibilities but also in developed countries where well trained support staffs allow pharmacists more time for clinical activities which can translate into improved patient health outcomes and savings in health expenditure.

What we hope to identify from this research

- The titles given to the positions involved in supplying medicines in public and private systems.
- The task and responsibility sets assigned by countries to these cadres.
- Where, and how, the Pharmacy Support Workforce are educated and trained.
- Are these programmes accredited? If yes, how, and by whom?
- What is the size of the workforce?
- Are the workers regulated? Are they licensed or certified? Do they have a legally defined scope of practice?

Who will be surveyed?

The Research population will include academics, ministry of health and/or education officials and key stakeholders accessed through the following networks:

- FIP (International Pharmaceutical Federation) -Pharmacy Education Taskforce,
- The World Health Organisation
- International Association Public Health Logisticians
- Global Health Workforce Alliance
- The People That Deliver Initiative
- United Nations Education Science and Cultural Organisation
- Health Workforce Education and Training- Best in Practice Initiative
Research Format

The research will consist of three components as approved by the Human Ethics Committee of the University of Canberra:

- An online questionnaire to characterise the global pharmacy support workforce that has been designed using the "SurveyMonkey" program.
- A more in depth phone or skype interview, will be used for a random subset of the online questionnaire respondents who indicate they would like to participate further in the project.
- An online asynchronous discussion forum, where communication occurs at fixed intervals in a focus group style, will be used to discuss the results as part of a validation process.

How will the information be stored?

- The research records will be kept by the University of Canberra in a locked room until the reports are written and published. This will take approximately 6 to 12 months.
- After this time the interview records will be shredded.
- Any electronic copies of the information collected will be kept for the same period on a password protect computer at the University of Canberra.
- All data collected will be de-identified and viewed only by project team members.
- Data collected will be stored and analysed in computer software that can only be accessed by project team members.
- Participants will be able to view the results in published reports.

How will the information be used?

- The findings will be formally published in the Human Resources for Health Journal, an online and open-access periodical.
- The results will be made available for inclusion in significant global pharmacy workforce reports.
- The information will be used by researchers at the University of Canberra for reports that will be given to governments, professional bodies and education institutions.
- In any reports we write we DO NOT give out information that identifies you as a person involved in this research. Respondents are not named in any reports.
How can you help? What do you need to do?

All academics, government officials and interested stakeholders are invited to participate by completing a survey questionnaire. Respondents may then have the option to participate further in one-on-one interviews and/or in an online forum by nominating themselves.

I am seeking your assistance in using your professional network to circulate this survey amongst suitable candidates for the study. I would be most grateful if you could pass on the details of this study to anyone you feel would be an appropriate participant.

Those willing to participate in the research survey can access the survey online by using the hyperlink. We will send a suggested email containing the link to the survey for you to forward.

Those who wish to nominate for an individual interview can do so by completing their details in the final section of the survey. I will notify directly those who are randomly selected to be part of the interview or focus group cohort.

Do you need more information?

If you would like more information please contact Andrew Brown, Assistant Professor at the University of Canberra email: andrew.brown@canberra.edu.au, Ph +61(0)411 137 625 or +61(0)2620 15033 who is the team leader for this project.

Or Ms. Katie Doherty, research assistant at the University of Canberra katie.doherty@uni.canberra.edu.au Ph (+61)403 919 679.

Thank you for your time and assistance
Yours sincerely

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