



# REPORT

**TO** Members of the National Executive **DATE** 5 November 2008  
**FROM** Diana Drumm **FILE**  
**SUBJECT** Pharmacy Technician Survey

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## Reason for Report:

To provide the results of the survey of Pharmacy Technicians

## Background:

Before planning what the Pharmaceutical Society of New Zealand can do for pharmacy technicians it is necessary to have a base line of their qualifications and present employment. In August a questionnaire was sent to all pharmacy technicians who are currently members of the PSNZ. In October a follow up questionnaire was sent to those technicians who had not replied to the first survey. A copy of the questionnaire is attached to this report.

## Results:

56 questionnaires were sent out and 25 returned. (45%)

Place of work:	Community	27
	Hospital	1
	Other ( Manager Urgent Pharmacy, Pharmaceutical Compounding)	2
Employment	Full time	23
	Part Time	7 (No of Hours 20 – 36)
Duties	Dispensing	100%
	Checking Pharmacist dispensing	64%
	Checking Technician dispensing	16%
	Selling Products, Providing Advice, Stock Control, Ordering	23 (92%)
	Compounding, Batching, Blister Packing, Patient Counselling,	Approx 80%
	Managing dispensary, Cash management	52%
	Managing shop	20%
	Managing staff	28%
	Rest Home visits/ Home visits	8%
	Ward Rounds (NB only 1 hospital technician in survey)	4%
Qualification	NZQA Certificate	19 (76%)
	PSNZ Pharmacy Technician Certificate	1 (4%)
	PSNZ Dispensary Technician Certificate	4 (16%)
	Trainee	1 (4%)
Place of Study	AUT	1 (4%)

	TOPNZ	24 (96%)
Other providers	e.g. Academy, BOP, Southland	0
Length of study time	1 year	1
	2 years	10
	3 years	12
	5 years*	2
	* included a trainee with no qualifications as yet!	

## Other questions

48% of the technicians had taken part in continuing education since qualifying and 88% would be willing to take part in further continuing education.

The suggested topics for continuing education (in order of choice) included:

- Disease states,
- How medicines work,
- Medicine interactions,
- Pharmacy updates,
- Communication skills,
- Palliative care,
- Addiction,
- Mental health,
- OTC medicines,
- New products.

Most stated that career opportunities in their present position were limited and would like to see a defined career path developed for technicians.

Asked what the Society could do for technicians, the answers included;

- Offer CE including short courses and even correspondence,
- Act as the governing body for all technicians and bring hospital and community together as they seem to be apart,
- Widen the range of opportunities for community technicians,
- Recognise technicians and value their place in pharmacy,
- Get together for technicians like the Symposia,
- Provide simple fact sheets with Q & A to stimulate technicians,
- Recognition of on the job learning and self-assessment.

## Discussion

It is interesting that most of the technicians are still studying by correspondence through TOPNZ whilst working full time. It appears that the advent of full time courses for technicians has not been widely taken up. This may be due to pharmacist preferring someone who has trained on the job rather than a graduate with limited practical experience.

Most technicians still spend the majority of their time in the traditional technician roles such as dispensing, batching etc but worth noting is that 64% act as a check for pharmacists and 16% check other technicians dispensing.

It was pleasing to see that several of the technicians had upgraded their qualification to the NZQA certificate from the PSNZ certificate and that 88% would like further education courses.

Approximately half the technicians said they were willing to take part in further discussions/workshops on their future role in pharmacy.

**Recommendations:**

1. That the Society and College investigate provision of courses for technicians at a reduced price.
2. That the Society encourages pharmacists to value the work done by technicians.
3. That the Society continues to work towards registration of technicians.
4. That technician specific sessions be included in future symposia.
5. That a working group of technicians be established to be the sounding board for future development of their role.

## Pharmacy Technician Survey

Please answer by ticking the tick box showing choices where applicable or add your own words

Are you currently employed?

Yes  No

If employed are you in?

Hospital  Community  Other

If other, what is your type of employment?

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Do you work?

Full time  Part time

If part time, how many hours per week, on average, do you work?

As a technician what duties do you carry out as part of your employment?

(Please tick the tick box for those items listed below that form part of your day-to-day work)

- Dispensing
- Checking dispensed items i.e. Final check when dispensed by a pharmacist
- Checking dispensed items i.e. Final check when dispensed by another technician
- Ward rounds
- Compounding
- Batching /sorting prescriptions
- Patient counselling
- Selling of products
- Providing advice to customers
- Managing Staff
- Managing dispensary
- Managing shop
- Cash management
- Stock control
- Ordering goods
- Blister packing/unit dose dispensing
- Rest Home visits
- Home visits

Others (Please list, use extra paper if necessary)

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- 
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What is your qualification?

- Pharmacy Technician  
NZQA
- Pharmacy Technician  
(PSNZ)
- Dispensary  
Technician (PSNZ)

Other? (Please state qualification)

How did you obtain this qualification?

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Did you study full time?

AUT  BOP

If so which at which provider?

Southland  Academy

Other (State provider)

Study part time?

Open Polytechnic NZ

How long did take for you to complete your qualification?

Since qualifying as a pharmacy technician have you done any further study?

If yes what study have you undertaken?

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If there were continuing education available to pharmacy technicians would you undertake such study?      Yes  No

If No Why not?

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If Yes What subjects would you like to study?

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What career opportunities are available to you in your current employment?

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Are you happy with your current status as a pharmacy technician?      Yes  No

If No What changes would make you more satisfied?

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Would you like to see a defined career path for pharmacy technicians in which further study and/or qualifications would lead to more responsibility?

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What would you like the Pharmaceutical Society of New Zealand to do for technicians?

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Thank you for taking the time to fill in this questionnaire  
If you have any queries or suggestions please do not hesitate to contact me - Diana Drumm