

What are hospitals looking for when recruiting intern pharmacists? A national survey of decision makers

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Background

In recent years, an increasing number of pharmacy students have applied to complete their internship in a hospital setting.

To differentiate among candidates, hospital pharmacy departments employ different measures to screen applicants and may consider a number of factors before offering employment to an applicant.

Currently, there is no literature to suggest what the most common contributing factors to pharmacy intern selection are in Australian hospitals.

Aim

To assess factors which contribute to pharmacy intern selection within Australian Hospital Pharmacy departments

To provide guidance to prospective interns on the most common contributing factors to intern selection within Australian Hospital Pharmacy departments

Methods

An electronic survey was developed exploring contributing factors and candidates' personal attributes considered important in recruiting intern pharmacists.

The survey was emailed to all Directors of Pharmacy in Australian hospitals, to be forwarded to staff involved in internship application and selection.

An invitation to complete the survey was also advertised in SHPA newsletters (e-news).

A 5-point Likert Scale was used to indicate the importance of contributing factors and candidates' personal attributes in the intern selection process.

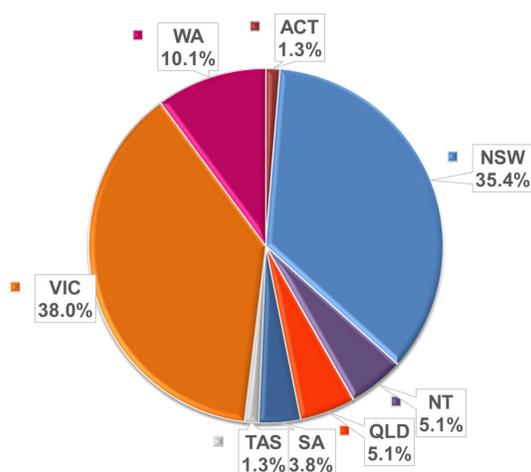
Statistical analysis was performed using SPSS (v23.0, Armonk, NY), with subgroup analysis performed using Mann-Whitney U tests

Results

In total, 82 pharmacists responded from around Australia.

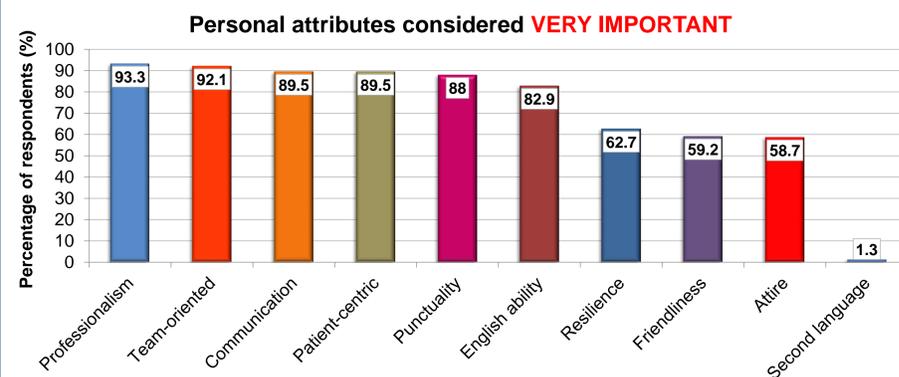
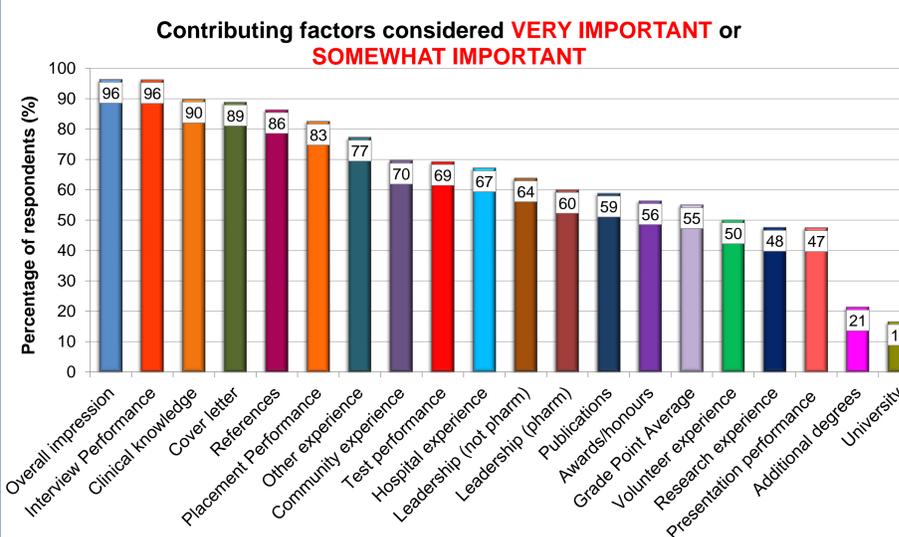
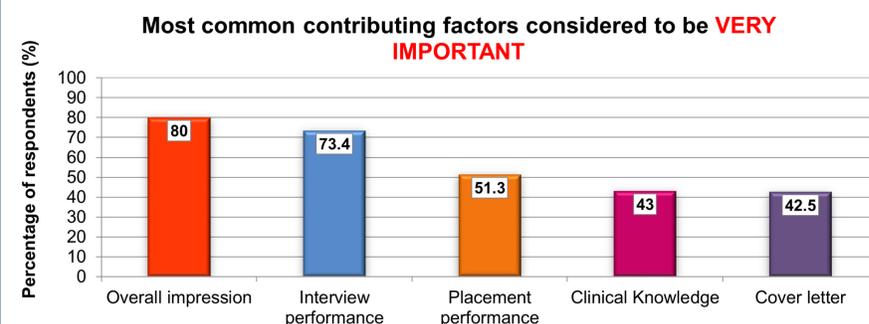
- 65% of respondents worked at metropolitan hospitals.
- 65% of respondents worked at hospitals with less than 500 beds.
- The median number of interns appointed at the respondent's hospital was 2 [IQR 1-4.25].

Percentage of Respondents per State



Role in intern selection	Percentage of Respondents (n)
Clinical Educator	73.2% (60)
Director/Deputy Director of Pharmacy	57.3% (47)
Screening applicants	39.0% (32)
Interview panel member	19.5% (16)

Results



States: NSW pharmacists placed more importance on applicants' clinical knowledge ($p < 0.01$) and command of English language ($p = 0.037$)

Metropolitan vs regional/rural: Greater importance was placed on cover letters in metropolitan hospitals ($p = 0.03$)

Hospital size: In larger hospitals (≥ 500 beds), greater importance was placed on research involvement ($p = 0.02$), interview performance ($p < 0.01$), quizzes and tests ($p = 0.01$) and communication skills ($p = 0.03$). In smaller hospitals, greater importance was placed on applicants' resilience ($p = 0.04$).

Number of interns With ≥ 5 interns, research involvement was more important ($p = 0.03$). With ≤ 4 interns, resilience was a more important attribute ($p = 0.03$).

Role in intern selection: Clinical educators were more likely to place significance on interview performance ($p = 0.03$). Directors/Deputy Directors of Pharmacy placed less importance on research involvement ($p = 0.04$).

Conclusion

There was broad agreement about important factors for recruiting intern pharmacists, however difference were found across respondent groups. These findings will provide guidance to prospective interns about factors contributing to selection in Australian hospital pharmacy departments.