

A Cross Sectional Study on Pharmacy Workforce in Saudi Arabia: Evaluating Supply and Demand, Distribution and Employment Prospects

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Abstract : The aim of this study was to evaluate the pharmacy workforce in Saudi Arabia in terms of supply, geographical distribution, nationality and gender distribution, as well as to assess the employment rate. A retrospective cross-sectional approach was used to address these objectives. Relevant data was identified and retrieved from the latest version of the Health Statistical Yearbook— Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 2016; Saudi Commission for Health Specialties publications, 2018; and national pharmacy organisation websites. In general, the exponential increase in the number of pharmacy schools has helped to produce more pharmacists in the rural areas of the country, but inequitable distribution of the workforce still exists. The reliance on non-indigenous pharmacists, especially in the private sector, is substantial. Male pharmacists outnumber females, mainly due to the cultural and social factors that limit the participation of women in community pharmacy, which is the largest employment sector. The employment rate shows limited opportunities for Saudi pharmacists at the Ministry of Health (MOH) as they have already Saudised almost all pharmacy positions at the MOH healthcare facilities. However, the private sector needs to assume responsibility for their share of the re-nationalisation of the profession in order to provide jobs for local pharmacists. Regular, more detailed profiling of the pharmacy workforce is an essential step to achieving effective pharmacy workforce planning. Currently, a large gap exists in our knowledge of the workforce in the country, especially regarding their supply and demand and employment prospects.

Keywords : employment prospects, pharmacy workforce, Saudi Arabia, supply and demand

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