

Rural Pharmacist Recruitment: The Right Prescription

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What recruitment and retention factors influence pharmacy workforce sustainability in rural Darling Downs communities, and what can be done about them?

Method

Pharmacist Community Apgar Questionnaire (PharmCAQ):

- Interviews 45-60mins, face-to-face questionnaire
- 50 factors from 5 classes related to pharmacist recruitment and retention in rural areas
- Factors were ranked (table below), scores calculated, and aggregated

Major advantage	Minor Advantage	Minor Challenge	Major Challenge
Very Important	Important	Unimportant	Very Unimportant



Participants:

- 4 Darling Downs communities (Modified Monash 4, 2-4 hours from Brisbane)
- 5 retail pharmacies, 3 hospital pharmacy departments
- n=19; (18 pharmacists, 1 pharmacy manager)
- 8 retail pharmacists, 7 hospital pharmacists, 3 worked in both settings



Pharm CAQ classes in overall rank order, higher ranking (1,2,3) indicates positive features of communities, lower ranking (4,5) present challenges to address.

Top and Bottom 10 Factors

All Participants

Promoters	Detractors
Respect and support	Day care
Practice autonomy	Housing
Financial income	Transport connections
Peer cooperation	Personal health service
Positive perception	Locum/peer coverage
Contract flexibility	Cultural acceptance
Work-life balance	Research participation
Community purpose	Cost of living
Financial support	Moving allowance
Breadth of tasks	Non-health services

Hospital Pharmacists

Promoters	Detractors
Peer cooperation	Day care
Financial income	Housing
Practice autonomy	Research participation
Contract flexibility	Locum/peer coverage
Respect and support	Cultural acceptance
Community purpose	Transport connections
Support staff	Resources
Collegial interactions	Cost of living
Work-life balance	Moving allowance
Positive perception	Recreational/adventure

Note: Hospital specific factors bolded

Strategic action plan delivered to each site which provided:

- A tailored gap analysis to assist with developing a recruitment and retention plan
- List of community specific promoters – factors valued by workers in a community
- List of community specific detractors – strategies to negate or reduce impact were provided, including successful strategies from other communities

References

1. Darling Downs Map. Available from <https://cubcare.com.au/ddkids/eligibility>
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