

Enjoy a fulfilling and diverse hospital Pharmacy career?



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Hi, my name is Wassana. I chose SA Pharmacy as the best place to train as a Pharmacist. After twelve great years, I am now a Clinical Pharmacy Coordinator – a team leader and one of the department's deputy directors.

It's the best place to start for a great career.

I joined the Royal Adelaide Hospital Pharmacy Unit in 2000, a year after leaving University.

As my focus was on gaining strong clinical experience I felt the best place to find it was in the hospital environment where there's so much variety, and also the opportunity to specialise.

For anyone looking to become a hospital pharmacist it's a good opportunity to join, learn, be part of, and experience the health system.

When I took my short term contract nothing was guaranteed, but it worked out well, I put myself out there and grabbed the opportunity.

I would tell anyone considering joining the SA Pharmacy Candidate Pool for pharmacists, that it's a chance to show your capabilities, find what you can really do, and discover a really supportive, friendly and fulfilling team culture.

It's funny - I never thought I'd stay so long

At the beginning I started in the dispensary. To be a good clinical pharmacist you really need to know the basics. You can learn as you go and it will make you better at your job in the long run.

You never know where an opportunity like this might take you and I believe that you should be open minded. When I went on to join the Repatriation General Hospital as senior pharmacist in 2002 it started out as a temporary contract but they wanted to keep me there – and I wanted to stay - and I've been there ever since!





Look where I am now, 12 years later I'm Clinical Pharmacy Coordinator – a team leader and one of the department's deputy directors

I've been in my new management role for just over a year. It's funny because I didn't aspire to be in management, I just wanted to be in a clinical environment, and to do the job I was trained to do.

Management has been a personal progression for me. I'm gaining so many insights into the big picture of the organisation, and how it all comes together.

This semester I've started studying for a Graduate Certificate in Health Administration at Flinders University, supported by SA Pharmacy.

It's interesting because it consolidates what I do on an everyday basis, and gives me a context to understand why we need to measure things like Key Performance Indicators.

I find it absolutely fascinating.

Supportive career development

My workplace is very supportive of my studying, and while most of it is external I do receive study leave to attend workshops, which is great. In fact, we actually have four people in our department now studying for their Masters degrees and they can take some leave to complete them.

I'm a people person.

As a pharmacist you can choose to specialise in many areas including Cardiology, Rheumatology, Oncology, Renal disease, manufacturing, surgical, distribution or management.

My role outside management focuses on Rheumatology medicine, ward rounds, seeing patients, counseling and medication reviews. I enjoy everything about it: I like being there, like being part of the decision making, enjoy the interaction with patients, and really developing those relationships. I'm very much a people person. My patients' average ages are between 65 -70 years, and they often have arthritis. As people age their medications need careful management, as often they will have complex problems and will be on multiple types of medication.

A Tennessee sabbatical

In 2005 I went to the US for 8 months with my husband as he was completing a post doctorate at St. Jude's in Memphis. I became Project Pharmacist there, helping to implement an electronic prescription system. It was a really worthwhile experience as I could learn about the systems used there and compare them with ours at home.

My colleagues are my friends. And vice-versa.

Since SA Pharmacy was formed in 2012 there is a greater sense of information sharing across the hospitals and communicating when handing over a patient and other common pharmacy practice issues as well.

It's part of the culture here to ask for advice and even though there isn't an official mentoring program, the junior pharmacists will ask the seniors for advice, and often vice versa when it comes to technical questions or IT, so it works both ways.

I really like the culture, the relationships within the department and in the Repatriation General Hospital. I'm friends with allied health professionals, doctors, nurses, everyone – it's a real community.

I feel like I fit in here, that I am part of a family, because everyone looks out for and supports each other: it sounds clichéd but it really is like that! I've made strong friends at work, and we hang out as friends, not just colleagues.

A happy medium

I have two young daughters who are two and four now. After taking maternity leave I decided to start off back at work part time, then chose to go back to work full time. As long as I manage my time well I can maintain the balance. It's working really well with the family and we're really happy.

Yes, I'm a positive person. When you spend so much of your time at work you need to make the most of everything.

I've gone down this path and I'm going to enjoy it – that's my mindset.

