Pharmacists in Canada, 2010

Pharmacists are regulated health professionals who assist their clients with medications to safely achieve desired health outcomes at home, in the community and in hospitals. They conduct research and work collaboratively with other health care providers to deliver optimal health care solutions. By incorporating best care principles that are patient-centred, outcome-oriented and evidence-based, their professional practice emphasizes drug therapy management of diseases and symptoms and the promotion of wellness and disease prevention.

The Numbers

Supply

- There were 31,195 pharmacists in Canada in 2010, an increase of 16.3% from 2006.
- The per-population supply of pharmacists in Canada has increased consistently since 2006. It rose from 82.1 per 100,000 population in 2006 to 91.1 per 100,000 population in 2010. Nova Scotia had the highest supply per population, at 122.4 pharmacists per 100,000 population. The Northwest Territories and Yukon had the lowest supplies, at 38.9 and 69.6 pharmacists per 100,000 population, respectively.

Demographics

- Gender distribution varied by province, and more than half of pharmacists were female (59.7%), an increase since 2006 (57.2%). The highest percentage of female pharmacists was in Nova Scotia (71.2%); the lowest was in Newfoundland and Labrador (52.6%).
- Almost one-third (31.5%) of employed pharmacists were older than 50, whereas more than one-quarter (28.3%) were in their 30s.
- Nearly two-thirds (65.0%) of pharmacists older than 60 were male. In contrast, 72.1% of pharmacists younger than 30 were female.
- The average age of pharmacists in Canada was 43.4. Ontario had the oldest pharmacists, with an average age of 44.8; the youngest were in the Northwest Territories, with an average age of 40.7.
CIHI's Definition of the Pharmacist Workforce in Canada

The pharmacist workforce is the total number of pharmacists who hold active registration in Canada and who are employed in the profession of pharmacy.

About CIHI's Pharmacists in Canada Report Series

Pharmacists in Canada is an annual report produced by the Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI). It provides the most recent statistics on the pharmacist workforce, including demographic, geographic, educational and employment information. Analyses are supplemented with detailed information about the data and an explanation of the analytical methods.

The entire report series can be found on CIHI’s website at www.cihi.ca.

About the Pharmacist Database

Since 2006, the Pharmacist Database (PDB) has collected information on the supply and distribution, demographics, geography, education and employment of pharmacists in Canada.

The provincial regulatory authorities and territorial governments are the primary data collectors for the PDB. In 2010, all provincial regulatory authorities and territorial governments, except those in Quebec and Nunavut, participated in the PDB.

Talk to Us

For more information about the PDB, please send an email to pdb@cihi.ca.

Education

- The majority of pharmacists had a baccalaureate degree (92.0%) as their current level of education.
- Ten universities in eight provinces offered a program in pharmacy. The University of Waterloo started offering its program in 2008; thus there were no graduates from that university in the 2010 pharmacist workforce.
- Slightly more than five percent (5.1%) of the pharmacists in the workforce were classified as new graduates, having a graduation year of 2009 or 2010. This proportion increased slightly from 4.2% in 2006.
- Most new graduates (90.5%) tended to work as staff pharmacists.
- Among pharmacists in Ontario, British Columbia, Alberta and Manitoba, 26.5% were internationally educated. One-fifth (20.3%) of those international graduates obtained their basic education in pharmacy in Egypt, followed by the United States (15.9%) and India (10.7%).

Employment

- Most pharmacists worked for a single employer (80.4%). Male pharmacists (22.5%) showed a higher tendency to have multiple employers than their female counterparts (18.0%).
- The majority of pharmacists (84.9%) were employed on a permanent basis, whereas less than 10 percent (8.1%) were self-employed.
- Almost two-thirds (63.9%) of pharmacists worked as staff pharmacists, while 30.0% worked as pharmacy owners or managers.
- More than three-quarters (75.8%) of pharmacists worked in a community pharmacy and 18.4% worked in hospitals and other health care facilities. A higher percentage of males (84.2%) worked in community pharmacies than females (70.5%).
- Almost half of the pharmacist workforce (46.0%) worked 40 or more hours per week. Conversely, less than five percent (4.8%) worked 14 or fewer hours per week.

Geography and Mobility

- Most (87.4%) employers of pharmacists were located in urban areas, while 12.6% were located in rural areas.
- Jurisdictions like the Yukon and Ontario had more pharmacists employed in urban areas—100.0% and 92.9%, respectively.
- Less-populous jurisdictions, such as Newfoundland and Labrador and New Brunswick, had only 62.2% and 71.9% of pharmacists in urban areas, respectively.