Current Views and Perceptions in the Pharmacy Profession on Well-Being and Resilience by Pharmacists and Student Pharmacists

Report Prepared for the American Pharmacists Association

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Executive Summary

The American Pharmacists Association (APhA) developed a project designed to examine and report findings on the views and perceptions of pharmacists on their individual:

• Aspects of life and experiences that provide professional and personal satisfaction and fulfillment.
• Causes of stress—both professional and personal.
• Needs related to maintaining professional and personal satisfaction and fulfillment.

Stress levels are also rising for student pharmacists, and they were included in this project as well.

A generic qualitative research design was used for this study, which aims to understand the perspectives of the people involved in a phenomenon. It focuses on descriptions of what people experience and how it is that they experience what they experience. For the purpose of this study, data were collected from 380 pharmacists and 332 student pharmacists who submitted written responses to an online survey hosted by APhA from November 17 to December 2, 2018, using standard data collection procedures applied by that organization.

The findings showed that pharmacists’ and student pharmacists’ basic human needs are being met, which allows them to recognize and pursue higher-order needs related to achievement, recognition, responsibility, advancement, relationships, self-esteem, self-actualization, meaning, and accomplishment in both their professional and personal lives.

The findings also revealed three areas for improving well-being and resilience for pharmacist professionals. First, there is a need to address the societal-level phenomenon of “workism” in which work becomes the centerpiece of an individual’s identity and life’s purpose and creates a myopic view of one’s time, finances, relationships, health, and fulfillment through the lens of our work.

Second, there is a need to address the organizational-level phenomenon of “moral distress” in which financial considerations in health care provision, documentation burdens, pressure to meet production metrics, and the constant specter of litigation distract from patient-centered care and lead to conflicts of interest. Health care practitioners face moral distress when they know an ethical dilemma is at stake and they know the morally right thing to do, but organizational constraints make it impossible to pursue the desired course of action.

Finally, there is a need to address the individual-level phenomena of “resilience and thriving” in which societal, organizational, self-care, and social support contribute to a person being able to go beyond his or her original level of functioning and to grow and function despite repeated exposure to stressful experiences. Characteristics that support this relate to self-esteem, hardiness, coping, coherence, self-efficacy, optimism, adaptability, risk-taking, determination, perseverance, and a tolerance for uncertainty.
From these findings, we provide three recommendations.

**Recommendation 1: Societal-Level Considerations**

At the societal level, respondents reported the challenges of: not having time to maintain a healthy lifestyle, being lonely, suffering anxiety and depression, having mental fatigue, striving for perfection, feeling pressure to follow norms, not meeting expectations, feeling inadequate, experiencing imposter syndrome, worrying about the political and social climate, feeling guilt, and dealing with negative effects of social media. We group these at the societal level because these are connected with the phenomenon called workism, which Derek Thompson describes in an essay for *The Atlantic* as “belief that work is not only necessary to economic production, but also the centerpiece of one’s identity and life’s purpose.” Many people in the workforce feel societal pressure to make their work their passion, that they should change the world through their work, and that they should not give up until they find the job they love. Additionally, student debt has tripled in the past 12 years without significant salary increases. Furthermore, there has been the disturbance of social media, which has amplified the pressure to craft an image of success to others. It has dehumanized interactions and created information anxiety since online connections never sleep and are accessible at all times. We propose that the notion of workism might be an emergent stressor in the pharmacist workforce. Work can easily become the centerpiece of one’s identity and life’s purpose since electronic connectivity is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week—and there is societal pressure to associate one’s dreams of self-actualization into our jobs. Our time, finances, relationships, health, and striving for perfection are all viewed through the lens of our work.

**Recommendation 2: Organizational-Level Considerations**

At the organizational level, respondents often described stress and what they need to overcome stress in terms of: unreasonable corporate demands, fear of failure, lack of support, lack of respect, technology overload, bureaucracy, and lack of freedom to practice as desired. We group these at the organizational level because they are consistent with the notion of moral distress, which occurs when a worker knows an ethical dilemma is at stake and knows the morally right thing to do, but institutional constraints make it impossible to pursue the desired course of action. Resilience is recognized as a key requisite for
coping with moral distress by focusing on personal characteristics, workplace characteristics, and social networks for support. However, proceedings of a recent National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine workshop on a design thinking, systems approach to well-being within education and practice recommended that “while helping individuals cope is worthy of time and attention, health professionals must put more focus on changing the system itself.... The system itself seems to be getting off easy and deserves more heat.”

Thus, our second recommendation relates to considering organizational-level changes with respect to moral distress. Pharmacy and health care organizations need to acknowledge that financial considerations in health care provision, documentation burdens, pressure to meet production metrics, and the constant specter of litigation distract from patient-centered care and lead to conflicts of interest and moral distress for practitioners. This recommendation does not pertain only to pharmacy—the whole health system is broken in this regard.

**Recommendation 3: Individual-Level Considerations**

At the *individual level*, respondents often described what they need to overcome stress in terms of being: kind, relaxed, mindful, positive, grateful, in a support group, in prayer, in meditation, in church, loving, present, in relationship with God, in the moment, focused on what is really important, intentional, patient, coping, calm, encouraging, and less obsessive-compulsive. Many of these descriptions are consistent with the notions of resilience and thriving, which Janet Ledesma of Andrews University defines as “a person’s ability to go beyond his or her original level of functioning and to grow and function despite repeated exposure to stressful experiences.” Thriving is characterized by self-esteem, hardness, coping, coherence, self-efficacy, optimism, social support, adaptability, risk-taking, low fear of failure, determination, perseverance, and a high tolerance for uncertainty.

Thus, our third recommendation relates to individual-level support for improving resilience and thriving even in stressful situations. Pharmacists should acknowledge the practices of self-care and peer support as important tools for fostering resilience and thriving. A recent survey of physicians published in *NEJM Catalyst* showed that 28% believe that individual responses to reduce clinician burnout are ineffective—it is primarily a system issue. Nonetheless, well-being and resilience should be considered jointly to represent how individuals are doing now and how well they are prepared for the future.

These recommendations are beyond the scope of one organization such as APhA. However, these recommendations can help frame discussions and deliberations as APhA works as a network organization within the National Academy of Medicine Action Collaborative on Clinician Well-Being and Resilience.
Background and Objectives

The environments in which pharmacists work, their amount of work, and type of work can influence their quality of work life and their work performance. An abundance of reported research describes pharmacist job stress, level of control, job satisfaction, professional commitment, work motivation, work overload, burnout, job turnover, and work performance. According to the most recent national workforce survey of U.S. pharmacists, 45% of all pharmacists (except for those working in independent community pharmacies) reported “having so much work to do that everything cannot be done well.” Only one-third of pharmacists in that national survey felt that they had a high level of control in their work environment. Those working mostly in patient care activities (and not dispensing activities) reported higher levels of stress related to their responsibilities and difficulty in balancing home life with work life responsibilities. Pharmacists working in community settings reported more time-related stress. The findings also showed that pharmacists who worked in settings that were not licensed pharmacies reported more control, satisfaction, professional commitment, and organizational commitment than pharmacists who were working in licensed pharmacies.

Jones and colleagues reported that 61% of clinical pharmacists practicing in hospital settings reported signs of burnout in 2016. Predictors of burnout included inadequate time for teaching and administrative duties, uncertainty of health care reform, too many nonclinical duties, difficult colleagues, and feeling underappreciated. Another study conducted in 2016 showed that 53% of health-system pharmacists exhibited high burnout on at least one subscale of the Maslach Burnout Inventory–Human Services Survey.

A study of community pharmacy teams (pharmacists and pharmacy technicians) conducted during 2015 in France showed that 56% of pharmacists and pharmacy technicians exhibited burnout syndrome. Furthermore, burnout syndrome was associated with anxiety, depression, alcohol abuse, and higher rates of consumption of health resources.

Job burnout and job stress are common for all health professions. A study in NEJM Catalyst reported that there are reciprocal domains of physician well-being that include practice efficiency, a culture of wellness, and personal resilience. Furthermore, key organizational interventions to help support well-being include organizational systems and infrastructure enhancement as well as regulatory and administrative efficiencies. At the individual level, the practice of self-care and peer support were highlighted as important tools for reducing clinician burnout.
Proceedings of a workshop that focused on the mental health and well-being of health professionals recommended that “while helping individuals cope is worthy of time and attention, health professionals must put more focus on changing the system itself.... The system itself seems to be getting off easy and deserves more heat.”48 A recent survey of physicians showed that 28% believe that individual responses to reduce clinician burnout are ineffective; burnout is primarily a system issue.47

Some are beginning to suggest that health care professionals are not burning out, but rather suffering from what has been termed “moral injury” and “moral distress.”49,50 Moral distress is a “‘psychological disequilibrium’ that occurs when a provider is able to make a moral judgment about the correct choice, but is not able to provide the care that is perceived to be ‘right’ or ‘best’ for the patient.”50 Talbot and Dean argue that financial considerations in health care provision, documentation burdens, pressure to meet production metrics, and the constant specter of litigation distract from patient-centered care and lead to conflicts of interest. To describe this further, Talbot and Dean wrote:49

Navigating an ethical path among such intensely competing drivers is emotionally and morally exhausting.... Routinely experiencing the suffering, anguish, and loss of being unable to deliver the care that patients need is deeply painful. These routine, incessant betrayals of patient care and trust are examples of “death by a thousand cuts.” Any one of them, delivered alone, might heal. But repeated on a daily basis, they coalesce into the moral injury of health care.

Moral distress was first defined in nursing as that which occurs when a clinician knows an ethical dilemma is at stake and knows the morally right thing to do, but institutional constraints make it impossible to pursue the desired course of action.51,52 Moral distress can contribute to burnout, job dissatisfaction, and job attrition.50

In light of modern health care systems creating moral distress for practitioners, resilience is increasingly recognized as a key requisite for coping in such systems.53,54 Whereas well-being is a psychological state at a point in time, resilience is a dynamic process, taking into account the past and the future, in order to deal with an adversity.54,55 Resilience for health care providers consists of personal characteristics, workplace characteristics, and social networks.54 According to Mguni and colleagues, individuals can be categorized into four groups based on high or low well-being and high or low resilience.55

- **High Well-Being and High Resilience**: These individuals are “happily weathering the storm” in that they experience a high level of well-being and have high resilience for coping with problems that might be around the corner.
- **Low Well-Being and Low Resilience**: These individuals are “unhappy and barely able to cope” with the stressors they face.
• High Well-Being and Low Resilience: These individuals are “satisfied but vulnerable” in that they report a current high level of well-being but are ill prepared for coping with problems that they might face.

• Low Well-Being and High Resilience: These individuals are “weathering the storm but unhappy”; they are applying strong coping skills, but nonetheless suffer from a low level of well-being.

Mguni and colleagues point out that well-being and resilience should be regarded together so that a richer understanding of how well individuals are doing now and how well they are prepared for the future can be considered.55

As described in the evidence summarized thus far, every sector of pharmacy is stressed and trying to do more with less. Financial considerations in health care provision, documentation burdens, pressure to meet production metrics, and the constant specter of litigation distract from patient-centered care and create moral distress for pharmacists. In light of these signs, the American Pharmacists Association (APhA) has committed itself to the well-being and resilience of pharmacy personnel and has signed on as a network organization within the National Academy of Medicine Action Collaborative on Clinician Well-Being and Resilience. The overall goal is to support an engaged and effective health care workforce that is a high-functioning care team that enriches patient–clinician relationships.

To support this initiative, APhA developed a project designed to examine and report findings on the views and perceptions of pharmacists on their individual:

• Aspects of life and experiences that provide professional and personal satisfaction and fulfillment.

• Causes of stress—both professional and personal.

• Needs related to maintaining professional and personal satisfaction and fulfillment.

Since there is evidence that stress levels are rising for student pharmacists, they were included in this project as well.56
Methods

Research Team and Reflexivity

Eight professionals comprised the research team. Two members (JCS, CAG) have experience in pharmacist workforce and quality of work life research. Four members (J-VRG, JAO, AC, LH) hold PharmD degrees and have experience in advanced clinical care practice. Two members (GS, JBS) have experience in collecting and analyzing pharmacist data for numerous projects associated with policy impact. Six of the eight team members hold licenses to practice pharmacy. Each member of the team interacts with pharmacists and student pharmacists on a regular basis. Each member of the team engages in activities that enhance well-being and resilience in their personal lives. The background of the research team provides strengths that helped them analyze and interpret the data collected for this project. However, assumptions were acknowledged and documented as part of the research process. Personal presuppositions were noted and accounted for in how the analysis may have been influenced.

Study Design

A generic qualitative research design was used to understand the perspectives of the people involved in a phenomenon. Generic qualitative research focuses on descriptions of what people experience and how it is that they experience what they experience.

Sample and Data Collection

Generic qualitative research collects data from a large representation of the population of interest to get a broad range of opinions, ideas, or reflections about people’s experiences and perceptions. This differs from many qualitative approaches in which relatively small numbers of people are studied in depth through detailed interviews, storytelling narratives, or focus groups. For the purpose of this study, data were collected from 380 pharmacists and 332 student pharmacists who submitted written responses to an online survey hosted by APhA from November 17 to December 2, 2018, using standard data collection procedures applied by that organization. APhA uses its member and affiliate data files as its sampling frame and limits the number of contacts per year for each person in those files. APhA provided de-identified responses to the research team for analysis. The University of Minnesota Institutional Review Board approved the research activity for reviewing Human Research Determination under study number 00002375.
Respondents wrote answers to the following 10 questions:

1. What are positive things in your professional life that give you satisfaction and fulfillment?
2. What are positive things in your personal life that give you satisfaction and fulfillment?
3. What are the things that you view as specific stressors in your professional life?
4. What are the things that you view as specific stressors in your personal life?
5. What interferes with your ability to meet your expectations in your professional life?
6. What interferes with your ability to meet your expectations in your personal life?
7. What needs do you have in your professional life that would enable you to achieve satisfaction and fulfillment?
8. What needs do you have in your personal life that would enable you to achieve satisfaction and fulfillment?
9. What are specific actions in your professional life that you could take to allow you to achieve satisfaction and fulfillment?
10. What are specific actions in your personal life that you could take to allow you to achieve satisfaction and fulfillment?

Analytic Method for Qualitative Analysis of Text

A whole-parts-whole approach was applied for analysis of the text. First, each research team member read the text in its entirety to get acquainted with the data. Next, the team read the text several times to highlight selectively what “seems particularly essential or revealing about the phenomenon or experience being described.” The focus was on the intentionality of the text—that is, the relationship between the subject and the object of which the text speaks. Each analyst conducted a line-by-line reading of the text and used careful note taking regarding text that has meaning for the objectives of the study. Assumptions were acknowledged and documented as part of the process. Personal presuppositions were noted and accounted for in how the analysis may have been influenced.

Another line-by-line reading was done to articulate meanings noted in the first reading and used to create a new document that contains original text plus analyst notes. After this step was completed, a final line-by-line reading was conducted to identify the emergence of “tentative manifestations” or themes. At this point, the research team identified preliminary titles for themes.
After these steps were completed, the research team members convened to discuss emergent themes and develop operational descriptions. Key segments of text were identified that best represented each theme. Personal presuppositions were disclosed and were useful for developing group consensus for theme identification and description.

**Rigor**

Credibility of the analysis was achieved through reflexivity by using journaling and memos, methodologies described by Lincoln and Guba and Caelli and colleagues.\(^60,61\) Confirmability was supported by reaching congruence among research team members regarding the data’s relevance, sense, and accuracy.\(^60,61\) Multiple readings of the text, with review by others engaged in the research, helped assure that the interpretations of the respondents’ words were represented accurately.\(^60,61\) Documentation and intercoder checks were applied to help assure that data interpretation echoed the respondents’ words and not the biases and viewpoints of the research team.\(^60,61\)

Transferability was supported by using a large representation of the population of interest to get a broad range of opinions, ideas, or reflections about people’s experiences and perceptions.\(^57,58,60\) Inductive thematic saturation was reached when thick, vivid descriptions were attained.\(^62\) Authenticity was supported through reflective journaling by the research team in order to clarify their assumptions.
Results

Respondent Characteristics

Pharmacist respondents (n = 380) worked in community pharmacy (35%), academic (26%), hospital (9%), and clinic (9%) settings with 2% not working and 19% working in 11 other types of settings. Regarding work position, 26% were staff pharmacists, 20% academics, 18% clinical pharmacists, 17% management, and 7% administrators, with the remaining 12% in training positions (resident, postgraduate student, fellow). Eighty-nine percent worked full time (at least 30 hours per week). One-half reported working with two or more employers since completing their first pharmacy degree with an average time with their current employer equal to 19 years. Regarding demographics, 73% were female, 78% white, 68% married, and 50% with an annual household income of $150,000 or more. The average age of respondents was 43 years and 2000 was the median year of graduation with their first pharmacy degree. Fifty-three percent reported having at least one child and 43% reported having at least one child younger than 26 years of age. Twenty-six percent reported being a caregiver for another person (spouse, child, parent).

Student pharmacist respondents (n = 332) worked in community pharmacy (49%), hospital (20%), academic (5%), and clinic (4%) settings with 10% not working and 12% working in four other types of settings. Regarding work position, 89% identified themselves as students with the other 11% reporting an “other” position (staff, management, resident). Only 4% worked full time (at least 30 hours per week) with 35% working part time and 61% in training. Regarding demographics, 73% were female, 65% white, 29% married, and 76% with an annual household income less than $50,000. The average age of respondents was 27 years and the median year of graduation with their first pharmacy degree was expected to be 2019. Eleven percent reported having at least one child and 11% reported having at least one child younger than 26 years of age. Eight percent reported being a caregiver for another person (spouse, child, parent).

A large representation of pharmacists and student pharmacists was achieved, which is desired for generic qualitative research. Pharmacist and student pharmacist respondents were similar in that they worked in diverse employment settings and each group was 73% female. Pharmacist respondents tended to be older in age, more experienced in their career, and working full time. Pharmacist respondents also were more likely to be white, married, and having a substantially larger annual household income compared with student pharmacist respondents. Additionally, pharmacist respondents were more likely to have children and more likely to be a caregiver for another person. These differences will be considered in the interpretation of the pattern of findings for pharmacists and for student pharmacists.
Objective 1: Satisfaction and Fulfillment

The first study objective was to describe aspects of life experiences that provide professional and personal satisfaction and fulfillment. Pharmacists and student pharmacists were asked to write their responses to the following questions:

- What are positive things in your *professional* life that give you satisfaction and fulfillment?
- What are positive things in your *personal* life that give you satisfaction and fulfillment?

**Pharmacist** responses for the question “What are positive things in your *professional* life that give you satisfaction and fulfillment?”

For the first question regarding pharmacists’ professional satisfaction and fulfillment, pharmacist responses were categorized into five themes: helping patients achieve clinical outcomes; relationships with colleagues and patient care teams; mentoring, advising, and teaching others; making a difference/effecting change; and professional development, recognition, and self-actualization.

**Theme 1: Helping Patients Achieve Clinical Outcomes**

This theme related to seeing one’s work as helpful to patients. Representative responses for this theme included:

- Being able to see patients begin to understand their disease states and take ownership of their health.
- The ability to help and give peace of mind to patients that they are going to be okay.
- Taking care of my patients and building trusting relationships with them.
- Giving people knowledge that can positively impact their health and quality of life.
- When I can make a difference in my patients’ lives. It is truly incredible to see reductions in A1C or blood pressure and thereby reduce morbidity and mortality.
- When I see the light bulb go off in a patient’s brain about understanding a disease state or how a drug helps it.
- Being able to have positive relationships with patients and helping them make better lifestyle decisions.
- Using my skills to improve patients’ medication therapy, enable greater access to care, and prevent potential medication errors.
Theme 2: Relationships With Colleagues and Patient Care Teams

This theme related to building relationships with colleagues and working together as teams. Representative responses for this theme included:

- Helping my physicians (oncologists) and nurses do a better job taking care of our patients.
- Staying on top of tasks which impact my staff; having the information needed to improve the role of my staff.
- Considered by many to be an expert and, therefore, often sought after for advice and guidance.
- Opportunities to share my knowledge and skills with other healthcare personnel.
- Building and maintaining great working relationships with medical professionals.
- Receiving recognition for the value pharmacists add to the healthcare team.
- Relationships with fellow pharmacists, physicians, mid-levels, nurses, and other members of the healthcare teams. Making interventions that impact and improve care.
- Great teammates working towards one common goal.
- Being part of a supportive team that is encouraging and receptive to my feedback.
- I really like that I am able to be part of a health care team. Doctors and nurses respect me and they call me for all sorts of things. Even for help to fix a printer! This just goes to show how highly they think of pharmacists. We are problem solvers, detectives, and well respected.

Theme 3: Mentoring, Advising, and Teaching Others

This theme related to mentoring, advising, and teaching trainees and students. Representative responses for this theme included:

- Fostering growth of learners such as precepting students and residents.
- Teaching students who are excited to learn, both in the classroom and on immersions.
- Inspiring students to learn.
- Seeing students progress through precepting.
- Seeing students understand something for the first time.
- Student appreciation and feedback.
- Helping students understand concepts and mechanisms.
- When students succeed (obtain job/residency) or improve (pass a course that they did not think they would).
- Interacting with students and seeing their growth and potential develop over time.
Theme 4: Making a Difference/Effecting Change

This theme related to making a difference and effecting change. Representative responses for this theme included:

- Developing immunizations and other professional services.
- Participating in professional organizations and advancing pharmacy.
- Being involved in professional organizations, attending professional conferences, working with colleagues at other universities.
- Presentations, manuscripts, research.
- Developing innovative projects and programs.
- Advancing product development to fill unmet needs for consumers.
- Impacting patient safety.
- Being an agent of change. Introducing new care models that yield positive business models that we can scale across our entire organization.
- Serving as president for my state association.
- Making changes in the health care system wide scale that will improve the level of pharmacy care patients receive for the long term.
- Working on ambulatory care projects that will improve the quality of care our providers and pharmacy offer to patients.
- Development of new services and project management.

Theme 5: Professional Development, Recognition, and Self-Actualization

This theme related to achieving professional development, self-actualization, recognition, and personal improvement. Representative responses for this theme included:

- Recognition for my work.
- Achieving my career goals; great benefits at the workplace, including generous vacation time.
- Job flexibility so that I can do the work on my own time.
- Flexibility, autonomy, respect.
- I am satisfied with my salary and ability to telework a few days per week.
- Having variety in my day and learn new things and use my curiosity and love of learning.
- Being able to integrate my work and personal values together.
- Leading weekly yoga and mindfulness classes for work colleagues across the organization (huge win!).
- Work schedule allows me to travel.
- Opportunities and resources available to support career development and well-being, transparency in work-related issues, fair assessment of performance, and flexibility for life-related issues.
- Job security.
• When God is with me—helping me to work.
• Flexibility and tuition waiver for my college-aged children.
• Autonomy as a practitioner.
• Feeling part of something important—something bigger than me.
• Constant change and learning.
• Flexible work schedule.
• Being able to complete everything I need to at work by the end of the day.
• Non-stressful environment where I have time to think and process.
• Bosses that respect your ideas and promote continuing education.
• Ability to be creative.
• Salary, opportunities for advancement, alignment in core values of the business.
• Autonomy in the work place, ability to create new programs/initiatives.
• Being appreciated and being part of the decision-making process.

Student Pharmacist responses for the question “What are positive things in your professional life that give you satisfaction and fulfillment?”

For comparison with pharmacist responses, student pharmacist responses for this first question regarding professional satisfaction and fulfillment were categorized into the same five themes that emerged for pharmacist respondents: helping patients achieve clinical outcomes; relationships with colleagues and patient care teams; mentoring, advising, and teaching others; making a difference/effecting change; and professional development, recognition, and self-actualization. Their responses were in parallel themes to that of pharmacists, but were worded from their perspective as students.

Theme 1: Helping Patients Achieve Clinical Outcomes
This theme related to seeing one’s work as helpful to patients. Representative responses for this theme included:
• Helping my patients, catching mistakes, providing good customer service and recommendations, solving problems.
• Effectively helping patients to get a healthier life.
• Making a difference in the lives of my patients.
• Hearing or seeing a patient get better to the point where they no longer need medical treatment.
• Helping patients with their medications and seeing them understand the directions or advice you provide.
• Being able to help patients have a better understanding of their medication and the health care process.
• Helping patients get their best treatment or find a lower cost for medicine.
• Happy patients. Healthy patients.
• Making clinical decision that positively impact patients’ lives.
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Theme 2: Relationships With Colleagues and Patient Care Teams
This theme related to building relationships with colleagues and working together as teams. Representative responses for this theme included:
• Being able to work with individuals as part of a health team that makes a difference in our organization.
• Socializing and networking with like-minded professionals.
• Great relationships with colleagues and other student pharmacists.
• Interactions with preceptors, professors, and other health professionals in which I am treated as a professional and an equal.
• The opportunities I have to build relationships with fellow student pharmacists, professors, and pharmacists at work. The fulfillment of being a helping hand in health care is very rewarding.
• I feel accomplished and respected as a member of the healthcare system.
• The ability to improve patients’ health and provide input into decisions made by the medical team.
• It is rewarding to relieve a pharmacist of stress by being able to carry a little bit of the workload.

Theme 3: Mentoring, Advising, and Teaching Others
This theme related to mentoring, advising, and teaching trainees and students. For student responses, this often included their perspective as a learner. Representative responses for this theme included:
• Teaching things to others gives me satisfaction and fulfillment.
• Doing well in school. Learning while I am at work.
• Teaching other pharmacy students and tutoring them in topics and increasing their understanding.
• Being able to apply what I’ve learned to clinical patient cases.
• Preceptors telling me that my work and clinical skills are proficient or excellent.
• Good grades, learning material I’m interested in, applying classroom knowledge to the real world.
• Learning from peers, learning new things.
• Educating patients.

Theme 4: Making a Difference/Effecting Change
This theme related to making a difference and effecting change. Representative responses for this theme included:
• Seeing how I can make a difference in my community with health fairs and working at my local pharmacy.
• Seeing patients happy and satisfied with the care we provide but also because their health is improving.
• Community outreach.
• Educating providers and empowering patients.
• Using sign language to change lives.
• Solving problems and seeing my work make a difference in patients’ lives.
• Community service, advocating for pharmacy, and participating in research projects.
• Knowing that I am making a difference in patients’ lives.

**Theme 5: Professional Development, Recognition, and Self-Actualization**

This theme related to achieving professional development, self-actualization, recognition, and personal improvement. Representative responses for this theme included:

• Gratitude from patients.
• Encouragement from preceptors, professors, and colleagues that help me remember that I am doing a great job.
• When patients compliment me on my counseling skills.
• Getting positive feedback from patients.
• Continued growth as a student and application at my job as an intern.
• My involvement in clubs and organizations.
• Getting a good grade, being recognized for my leadership or academic skills, and being able to work with inspiring peers and professors.
• Professional development that contributes to a sense of purpose while also elevating perspective on all aspects of life.

**Pharmacist** responses for the question “What are positive things in your personal life that give you satisfaction and fulfillment?”

For this second question in the area of satisfaction and fulfillment, pharmacists were asked about their personal satisfaction and fulfillment. Pharmacist responses to this question were categorized into four themes: relationships with family and friends; activities that rejuvenate; purpose; and stability and security.

**Theme 1: Relationships With Family and Friends**

This theme related to relationships with family and friends. Representative responses for this theme included:

• Family and friends. Social gatherings.
• Supporting my loved ones and contributing to their success.
• Spending time with loved ones.
• Thankful for the people in my life.
• Church family.
• Strong family support system.
• My children.
• Intimacy in a loving relationship.
• People taking time to be with me.
• Quality time with family and friends.
• Connection to my family and friends.
• The success and experiences of my children.

Theme 2: Activities That Rejuvenate
This theme related to activities that rejuvenate. Representative responses for this theme included:
• Being able to give back.
• Learning new things. Crafting. Cooking.
• Running, training, triathlon competing.
• Art, games, travel.
• Home improvement projects.
• Gardening.
• Time outdoors.
• Sports.
• Pets.
• Bible studies.
• Hobbies.
• Learning from others.
• Volunteering time to causes I care about to bless others.
• Sleep.
• Community involvement.
• Free time.
• Dancing.
• Sex.
• Music.
• Nature.
• Yoga.
• Weight lifting.
• Social events.
• Going to church.
**Theme 3: Purpose**
This theme related to having purpose in their lives. Representative responses for this theme included:
- Working in a profession that has mission.
- Purpose.
- Living with gratitude.
- Having a sense of life balance.
- Feeling healthy and engaged in my life and relationships.
- Feeling like I make a difference.
- Ability to manage home life with professional life.
- Knowing I’m loved.
- Having a business that also feels like a ministry.

**Theme 4: Stability and Security**
This theme related to having a sense of stability and security. Representative responses for this theme included:
- Financial stability.
- Be the main provider for my family.
- Being able to live the life I want given my salary.
- Being healthy, being financially stable to pay my bills.
- Job security.
- Making a good living.
- Living in a safe area.
- I have a crushing amount of debt, but there is a light at the end of the tunnel for me.
- Lack of debt.
- Financially comfortable.
- Health and fitness.
- Being well-paid.
- Health and wealth.
- Having a stable home.
- Happiness.
For comparison with pharmacist responses, student pharmacist responses for this question were categorized into the same four themes that emerged for pharmacist respondents: relationships with family and friends; activities that rejuvenate; purpose; and stability and security. Their responses were in parallel themes to that of pharmacists, but were worded from their perspective as students.

**Theme 1: Relationships With Family and Friends**
This theme related to relationships with family and friends. Representative responses for this theme included:
- Family, friends.
- Being in a healthy relationship.
- Authentic connections to other people I may interact with on a daily basis.
- Having deep connections.
- Quality time with family and friends.
- Having a loving family and friend base that are supportive.
- My wife, my faith, and my church family.
- My faith, my family and friends, and taking time to realize how God has blessed me especially in the little things that you don’t normally think about.
- Seeing my kids do well and develop into their own likes and interests.
- I have an amazing church family that I am able to see every Sunday and Wednesday that really keep me grounded and remind me of what is important.
- Support system.

**Theme 2: Activities That Rejuvenate**
This theme related to activities that rejuvenate. Representative responses for this theme included:
- Pets, painting, book club.
- Making a nice dinner rather than going out to eat.
- Travel.
- Helping others.
- Hobbies.
- Workouts.
- Singing in church choir.
- Volunteering.
- Exercise, meditate, pray.
- Art and music.
Theme 3: Purpose
This theme related to having purpose in their lives. Representative responses for this theme included:

- Knowing that my hard work in pharmacy school is paying off.
- Progression toward completing my goals.
- Christian spirituality.
- My faith is a big one.
- I like to interact with other cultures...mission trips.
- Meeting expectations.
- Achieving a personal goal or item on my bucket list.
- Positive attitude towards healthcare and passion for helping others.
- My persistence to grow as a person.
- Feeling proud of what I am achieving.
- Academic achievement.
- Learning more about my purpose in life.

Theme 4: Stability and Security
This theme related to having a sense of stability and security. Representative responses for this theme included:

- Work/life balance.
- Being appreciated.
- Being able to time manage everything.
- Feeling like I am in control of my life.
- Having a good income to live comfortably.
- Being able to provide for myself and family without trouble.
- Freedom.
- When my relationships are in harmony.
- Being able to volunteer without being pressed for time to do other things such as study.
Objective 2: Causes of Stress

The second study objective was to describe aspects of life experiences that cause stress. Pharmacists and student pharmacists were asked to write their responses to the following questions:

- What are the things that you view as specific stressors in your professional life?
- What are the things that you view as specific stressors in your personal life?
- What interferes with your ability to meet your expectations in your professional life?
- What interferes with your ability to meet your expectations in your personal life?

Pharmacist responses for the question “What are the things that you view as specific stressors in your professional life?”

For this question regarding the things that pharmacists view as specific stressors in their professional life, pharmacist responses were categorized into five themes: time management; organizational management; angry/abusive customers/patients; fear of failure/inadequacy; and inadequate recognition.

Theme 1: Time Management

This theme related to managing time to get everything accomplished satisfactorily. Representative responses for this theme included:

- Getting everything done—volume we fill, overload with paperwork, questions from employees and techs, giving vaccines in the middle of work flow, chit chat and cell phone techs use.
- Numerous competing responsibilities and deadlines. Never seeming to have enough time to do all things well.
- Have to multitask (review prescription and make required phone calls), too many required phone calls, not enough help, always rushing, no time to take care of my needs (bathroom breaks, eat lunch).
- Always feeling behind (currently I have 1699 unread emails, yet I am addressing them for most of the day and back on after getting kids to bed); missing an email or task which impacts my staff.
- It is stressful to meet all of the deadlines required through my position and to ensure that I am performing at the highest possible level.
- Lack of time for creativity.

Theme 2: Organizational Management (Staff, Workflow Processes)

This theme related to how the organization is managed. Representative responses for this theme included:

- Lack of a contract (working per diem currently).
• Corporate demands to achieve measured goals—number of vaccines per week, amount of money collected on MTMs.
• Fear of being laid off and unable to find employment, poor relationships with co-workers, no obvious path for upward mobility within the organization, lack of better relationships between pharmacy and other departments in our organization.
• Stupid upper management or management that refuses to consider alternative thinking.
• Lack of focus and inadequate human and financial resources.
• Bureaucratic reports that do not initiate any change in patient care or the system.
• Unrealistic expectations by management.
• Feeling on the outside when big decisions are made, changing priorities, arbitrary metrics, colleagues who are not team players, budget constraints, not having my voice heard.
• Impossible to meet company metrics, unable to give patients the time they deserve, the do-more-with-less-help company attitude.
• Inordinate amount of responsibilities, unclear expectations, lack of support from leadership, low morale amongst colleagues at work.
• Keeping up with multiple prescription plan changes and processing of insurance claims; after years one would think a simplified method would have been devised to streamline process.
• Regional managers who only care about metrics.
• Too much focus on productivity metrics and not enough on the actual care provided to patients.

**Theme 3: Angry/Abusive Customers/Patients**

This theme related to interacting with angry or abusive patients. Representative responses for this theme included:

• Rude and unfriendly patients, dealing with conflict.
• Being in community pharmacy, the customer service aspect can be stressful. As the pharmacist you bear all the responsibility of the actions of your team whether you are present or off duty (that is, happened during off shift) and some patients can be very aggressive.
• Being yelled at for things I cannot change.
• Patients’ impatience.
• I work in community chain environment, so I get a lot of extremely rude patients.
• Being bullied and yelled at by customers.
• Cranky patients. Impatient people.
Theme 4: Fear of Failure/Inadequacy

This theme related to experiencing fear of failure or inadequacy sometimes referred to as “imposter syndrome” (fear of being exposed as a fraud). Representative responses for this theme included:

- Fear of failure/pressure to succeed.
- Inadequate and not knowledgeable about various disease states and being looked to as someone who should know much more than I actually do.
- Requests to get ready medications stat that I am unfamiliar with.
- Feeling like my work is never good enough.
- Self-imposed pressure to overachieve and impress others.
- Feeling like I don’t know a lot of therapeutic information. I get stressed out when I have to take phone calls. I don’t fully understand how to use our EHR and they don’t do formal training in my workplace.
- Being asked to do things when I have no knowledge of how to accomplish the tasks.
- Imposter syndrome.

Theme 5: Inadequate Recognition

This theme related to not feeling recognized or appreciated. Representative responses for this theme included:

- Lack of recognition for the value we bring to patient care, challenges in getting recognized for our services, always having to justify why we as a profession matter.
- Lack of compensation and lack of appreciation by my employer. Feeling like I am being taken advantage of by those in managerial positions, inadequate rewards/incentives from my work.
- Lack of recognition (especially by our new leadership).
- Lack of appropriate compensation/pay.
- My talents are being wasted; people that don’t care about patients.
- Lack of support/acknowledgment from manager.
- Feeling underappreciated by certain prescribers who are difficult to communicate medication concerns to.
- Lack of professional respect.
- Lack of doctor office cooperation (unreturned phone calls).
- Despite being more accessible than anyone in the health care field, we are taken for granted and often treated like crap.
- Patients who don’t respect me as a medical professional.
- Not being able to connect with certain physicians, they don’t take my professional advice seriously.
• Prescribers who view pharmacists as intrusions rather than collaborations.
• Doctors can sometimes misread your intentions from a professional query about a patient and take it personally.
• Not being addressed as doctor by others.

Student Pharmacist responses for the question “What are the things that you view as specific stressors in your professional life?”

For comparison with pharmacist responses, student pharmacist responses for this question were categorized into the same five themes that emerged for pharmacist respondents: time management; organizational management; angry/abusive customers/patients; fear of failure/inadequacy; and inadequate recognition. Their responses were in parallel themes to that of pharmacists, but were worded from their perspective as students.

Theme 1: Time Management
This theme related to managing time to get everything accomplished satisfactorily. Representative responses for this theme included:
• The quotas and fast pace you have to keep up with.
• Having to keep up with deadlines for assignments while taking time to study.
• Busy, high-pressured situations that need to be dealt with immediately.
• When you have too many things to do and not enough time to get them done.
• My own procrastination and lack of being able to focus on classes. I have to multitask to have any attention in class.
• Having to balance going to class, extra hours of studying at home, obligations to student organizations, responsibilities at home, and taking care of myself (sleep, exercise, eating healthy).
• When a lot of people are counting on me and when things are time sensitive.
• Multitasking and forgetting which project was being worked on.

Theme 2: Organizational Management (Staff, Workflow Processes)
This theme related to how the organization is managed. Representative responses for this theme included:
• Prescription promise times turning red in the queue, five incoming calls at any moment, high-performance expectations with limited resources. Nearly daily calls asking to come in and cover shifts for co-workers on top of a 40+ hour APPE week.
• Unreasonable work load and expectations. Inability to be flexible in regard to shifts and duties.
• Breakdown and inconsistency in communication, systemic inefficiencies, excessive complexities in processes.
• Insurance and laws that make it difficult to provide best patient care.
• Band-Aid approach to health and disease.
• Technology issues.
• Hierarchy in healthcare.
• Politics—they keep cutting pharmacist hours at the company I work for.
• Not being able to do my job if the technology is not working.
• Having to fight for disability accommodations.
• Schedule changes without notice.

**Theme 3: Angry/Abusive Customers/Patients**

This theme related to interacting with angry or abusive patients. Representative responses for this theme included:

• Lack of health literacy in patients.
• Hostile patients who do not understand how the health care system works or are uninterested in taking a part in their own care.
• People who are difficult or disgruntled.
• Rude people.
• Being around people who make me feel bad about myself.
• Angry customers.
• Unreasonably angry customers.
• Patient/provider misunderstanding and dissatisfaction.
• Patient frustration and complaints due to various things outside my control such as insurance issues or doctor miscommunications.
• When patients don’t listen to recommendations. When patients are noncompliant to their medications.

**Theme 4: Fear of Failure/Inadequacy**

This theme related to experiencing fear of failure or inadequacy sometimes referred to as “imposter syndrome” (fear of being exposed as a fraud). Representative responses for this theme included:

• I stress constantly about being competitive for future jobs.
• Life (and pharmacy) is much more complicated than what we can be taught in class. It is important to realize they are teaching us the basics of pharmacy but more importantly how to interact and problem solve.
• Perfect grades, fear of judgment if struggling.
• The potential for contributing to negative outcomes.
• The pressure of having to complete a residency in order to move forward in my career.
• Not having all the answers or knowledge to treat or help patients.
• Not knowing enough clinical information and not being able to help other healthcare professionals in emergent situations.
• Not being prepared to counsel, answer questions, or make recommendations for patients.
• Looking dumb in front of others.
• Responsibility for patients’ safety.
• Struggling to meet expectations, mistakes.
• My lack of knowledge. I feel that I struggle to learn and retain all the information I need to know. This is embarrassing.
• Not knowing if what I’ve done is good enough to land me in the career I want.
• Classmates that score better than me. It makes me feel as though I am not smart or I won’t be as good of a pharmacist.
• Judgment by others that I am not good enough.
• If I will be good at my profession, taking care of people and not causing harm.
• Not knowing how to do things on my own, having to keep asking how to do something I’ve already learned but don’t remember how to do it.

Theme 5: Inadequate Recognition
This theme related to not feeling recognized or appreciated. Representative responses for this theme included:
• Disrespect. A simple “hello, how are you” can go a long way but when co-workers or bosses disregard these simple pleasantries it shows they do not care about you.
• Learning how to deal with people that disrespect or underestimate me.
• Physicians putting ego above patient safety.
• Poor wages.
• Being talked down to by other medical professionals.
• When physicians are not willing to listen to pharmacists’ recommendations.
• Patients not understanding the work I do and the time it takes to make sure they remain healthy.
Pharmacist responses for the question “What are the things that you view as specific stressors in your personal life?”

For this question regarding the things that pharmacists view as specific stressors in their personal life, pharmacist responses were categorized into five themes: time management; finances; relationships; health; and striving for perfection.

**Theme 1: Time Management**

This theme related to managing time to get everything accomplished satisfactorily. Representative responses for this theme included:

- Too busy...not enough downtime.
- My work carries over to personal. I am exhausted when I go to work early and stay late with no compensation.
- Having enough time to do what needs to be done with regard to home maintenance, self-care, medical appointments for anxiety disorder.
- Lack of time with my wife who is more involved in community projects than I am.
- No lunch break #pharmacistsarepeopletoo.
- Not enough sleep, time with family, not being able to eat lunch.
- I get stressed when I have a lot of things on my to-do list but not enough time to get them done.
- I would like more time for my personal life.
- Time to enjoy life outside of professional environment.
- Lack of time for myself to relax.
- Finding enough time with young kids to balance family and personal time.

**Theme 2: Finances**

This theme related to managing money and finances. Representative responses for this theme included:

- Long-term financial goals to achieve early retirement.
- Paying for childcare and other household expenses have spread our finances thin.
- Student loans.
- Unanticipated housing and family expenses.
- Financial pressure of being a single parent.
- Uncertainty of future employment.
- Unexpected car and home repairs.
- Financial planning/retirement planning.
- Money is always a stressor especially with salary and hour decrease.
• Not being able to get enough hours at work due to oversupply of pharmacists leads to inability to pay off loans sometimes.
• I grew dependent on my pharmacist income when I should have stayed true to just caring for patients.

Theme 3: Relationships
This theme related to interpersonal relationships. Representative responses for this theme included:
• Distance of family from where I live.
• Family hardships.
• Relationship interpersonal miscommunications and misunderstandings.
• Problems with family members.
• I stress about my family's well-being, especially when I have to work extra hours and at erratic schedules. Being mentally well for them.
• Marriage, children, personal commitments, family members.
• Difficulties with oldest child and interfamily dynamics; interacting with my ex-husband over just about anything.
• Self-centeredness, inability of people to control their emotions and not overreact.
• Conflict with others.
• My marriage is crumbling and it adds a lot of stress to my life.
• I feel stressed that I won't find a husband or have a family.
• Teenage kids.
• Toddlers.
• I’m divorced and my kids live 5 hours away.

Theme 4: Health
This theme related to personal health and the health of others. Representative responses for this theme included:
• Poor health and disability.
• Family that is ill, elderly parent.
• Being positive even when tired and stressed out.
• Some psychological challenges and issues.
• Healthy lifestyle (exercise, healthy diet).
• Loneliness, PTSD, Chicago weather.
• Feeling mentally and physically exhausted from work so I no longer enjoy hobbies.
• As I get older, I struggle with more health problems and do not have the energy I had when I was younger.
• My mom recently got diagnosed with ovarian cancer.
• Unhealthy parents and pets.
Theme 5: Striving for Perfection
This theme related to striving for perfection that meets an idealized state. Representative responses for this theme included:
- Pressure to follow norms.
- Fighting the tendency to feel like I need to be perfect.
- Current political and social climate.
- When I am at home, I’m always worried about work.
- The state of the world, traffic and pollution, and people are not taking responsibility for their health and environment.
- The guilt I feel for missing milestones in my daughter’s life.
- The guilt I feel trying to incorporate better lifestyle habits.
- Society pressuring me to settle down, get married, and have kids.

Student Pharmacist responses for the question “What are the things that you view as specific stressors in your personal life?”
For comparison with pharmacist responses, student pharmacist responses for this question were categorized into the same five themes that emerged for pharmacist respondents: time management; finances; relationships; health; and striving for perfection. Their responses were in parallel themes to that of pharmacists, but were worded from their perspective as students.

Theme 1: Time Management
This theme related to managing time to get everything accomplished satisfactorily. Representative responses for this theme included:
- Not having enough time to recharge myself.
- Not having enough time with my family and not having time to clean my house.
- Feel the need to go 24/7.
- Meeting my personal goals on time.
- Lack of time to rest.
- Procrastination.
- Little time to enjoy my youth.

Theme 2: Finances
This theme related to managing money and finances. Representative responses for this theme included:
- I have bills to pay.
- Financial stress.
- Having to think about repaying loans.
- Financial anxiety.
- Money.
• Achieving financial stability.
• When bills come due and you have to scrape together enough funds to pay them.
• Financial restraints due to inability to work due to school.
• Living costs, student costs.
• Pharmacy school and everything that comes with it is expensive.
• Financial trouble.

**Theme 3: Relationships**
This theme related to interpersonal relationships. Representative responses for this theme included:
• Work–relationship balance.
• Deaths in family and marriage.
• Arguments with loved ones.
• Family conflicts.
• Getting married soon.
• My mom keeps asking for money, my dad has cancer, my brother is transgender which makes me scared someone would hurt him.
• Hurtful relationship mistakes.
• When people I consider important to my life are unsupportive and add no value to my life.
• Conditions at home, dealing with spouse.
• My kids not listening to me.
• Marital problems. Kids not listening.

**Theme 4: Health**
This theme related to personal health and the health of others. Representative responses for this theme included:
• Caring for multiple people and worrying about their well-being.
• Weight gain.
• Loneliness.
• Dealing with depression.
• Dealing with anxiety disorder.
• Lack of self-care.
• Uncertainty. Loneliness.
• I stress over implications of not keeping my health in control.
• Medical problems.
Theme 5: Striving for Perfection

This theme related to striving for perfection that meets an idealized state. Representative responses for this theme included:

- Expectations and pressure from family and friends.
- Failing to live up to the expectations my family has of me. Failing in anything I do makes me feel like I am incompetent and have a long way to go.
- Social media.
- The need to meet the requests of my mother and father-in-law.
- Not knowing if I will have a residency.
- Things that are out of my control.
- Expectations.

Pharmacist responses for the question “What interferes with your ability to meet your expectations in your professional life?”

For this question regarding the things that pharmacists view as interfering with their ability to meet their expectations in their professional life, pharmacist responses were categorized into five themes: time management; organizational management; relationships; health; and striving for perfection.

Theme 1: Time Management

This theme related to managing time to get everything accomplished satisfactorily. Representative responses for this theme included:

- Being pulled in too many directions.
- Overwhelmed to the point that I have a hard time devoting attention to one important task.
- Not enough time. Too many responsibilities.
- I struggle when trying to handle multiple issues at the same time and get stressed and anxious.
- I over-promise because I have the best intentions.
- Involvement in too many areas and not enough time to spend on each.

Theme 2: Organizational Management

This theme related to how the organization is managed. Representative responses for this theme included:

- Workload and staffing.
- Poor management.
- Legislative and regulatory barriers.
- Dollars over people and health.
- Poorly run pharmacy.
- Inability to share ideas for work improvement due to administration not asking or listening.
• Inefficiencies in the system.
• Lack of support, tech help.
• Union guidelines.
• Slow computers.
• Third-party contracts. Direct and Indirect Remuneration (DIR) fees.

Theme 3: Relationships
This theme related to interpersonal relationships. Representative responses for this theme included:
• Challenges in collaboration.
• Lack of cooperation.
• Toxic co-workers.
• Work–Home balance.
• Newer pharmacists haven’t embraced pharmaceutical care concepts.
• My marriage stresses me and I lose concentration.
• Lack of team play.
• My coworkers are [expletive] and psychos.
• Difficult faculty, workplace politics.
• Boss, bullies.
• Family stress.
• Patient unwillingness to make changes in behavior.

Theme 4: Health
This theme related to personal health and the health of others. Representative responses for this theme included:
• Stress and fatigue.
• I meet my expectations but at the cost of my sanity sometimes.
• Personal mental illness.
• Being tired.

Theme 5: Striving for Perfection
This theme related to striving for perfection that meets an idealized state. Representative responses for this theme included:
• Self-doubt.
• Limitations on practice abilities.
• My own feeling of inadequacy.
• Fear of failure limits me.
• Job insecurity.
• My lack of confidence.
Student Pharmacist responses for the question “What interferes with your ability to meet your expectations in your professional life?”

For comparison with pharmacist responses, student pharmacist responses for this question were categorized into the same five themes that emerged for pharmacist respondents: time management; organizational management; relationships; health; and striving for perfection. Their responses were in parallel themes to that of pharmacists, but were worded from their perspective as students.

**Theme 1: Time Management**

This theme related to managing time to get everything accomplished satisfactorily. Representative responses for this theme included:

- Not having time to recharge.
- Over-commitment. Lack of opportunity to be creative.
- Procrastination.
- Too many projects and assignments at once.
- Spread too thin.
- Sometimes not enough time with patients.
- Not being able to say no when asked to participate in something.
- Stress from multiple obligations.

**Theme 2: Organizational Management**

This theme related to how the organization is managed. Representative responses for this theme included:

- Unnecessary assignments.
- Lack of disability accommodations.
- Management.
- Bureaucracy.
- Insurance companies.
- Corporate restrictions on labor hours.
- Corporate decisions.
- Limitations of the workplace.
- Companies that are unwilling to listen to employees and the pharmacy profession.

**Theme 3: Relationships**

This theme related to interpersonal relationships. Representative responses for this theme included:

- Personal commitments balanced with sleep and work.
- Obligations to my family.
• Lack of relationships with professors and lack of opportunities for leadership.
• Planning a wedding.
• Encountering people who do not want to listen or who view me as the enemy.
• Work-life balance.
• My husband.
• Personal relationships.
• Personal stressors.
• Personal life.

**Theme 4: Health**
This theme related to personal health and the health of others. Representative responses for this theme included:
• Not enough energy.
• Lack of sleep.
• Feeling burnt out.
• Health.
• Anxiety.
• My mental health.
• Stress, anxiety, depression.
• Personal struggles with extreme anxiety.
• Sleep, social life, staying healthy.
• Fatigue.

**Theme 5: Striving for Perfection**
This theme related to striving for perfection that meets an idealized state. Representative responses for this theme included:
• Financial problems.
• Not meeting expectations.
• Knowledge gap.
• My fear of failure.
• Lack of confidence in my knowledge thus far from school.
• Constant pressure to perform.
• Each preceptor expects something different and these expectations are not clearly stated.
• Need to “measure up.”
• Lack of confidence.
• Fear and low self-esteem.
• The amount of expectations on me in my professional life.
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- High expectations from others.
- Lack of confidence and uncertainty.
- My inability to learn quickly enough. I feel like an idiot.
- My own judgment and perception of myself and fear of what others think about me.
- Doubts in myself.
- Failure thoughts.
- Embarrassment.

Pharmacist responses for the question “What interferes with your ability to meet your expectations in your personal life?”

For this question regarding the things that pharmacists view as interfering with their ability to meet their expectations in their personal life, pharmacist responses were categorized into five themes: time management; finances; relationships; health; and striving for perfection.

Theme 1: Time Management
This theme related to managing time to get everything accomplished satisfactorily. Representative responses for this theme included:
- Competing priorities for time.
- The amount of time I spend at work, the length of my commute.
- Two little kids that unravel everything behind me. Cleaning your house with kids is like brushing your teeth while eating Oreos.
- Not taking time to invest in myself and take a break from everything.
- Having to stay at work 2 hours off the clock to get the day’s work done.
- When you don’t schedule the time there is no time.
- Lacking time to make meaningful connections with those I care about.
- Having email on my phone.

Theme 2: Finances
This theme related to managing money and finances. Representative responses for this theme included:
- High interest rates on student loans.
- The rat race to have the basics like health insurance, income to be comfortable. Not rich, but enough to provide for crucial things like health, shelter, education, etc.
- Student loan debt.
- Cost of recreational activities.
- Uncertainty in the market in which my retirement is invested.
• Earning enough money. I am the only wage earner in my household.
• University enrollment is down so no faculty raises.
• Being financially bound to working for a certain amount, rather than balancing work, home, volunteering, church, friends, etc.
• Lack of wage growth.

Theme 3: Relationships
This theme related to interpersonal relationships. Representative responses for this theme included:
• Family spreading out to different regions.
• Child, spouse, exhausted.
• Personal trauma.
• Family stress, competing personal and professional priorities.
• Interpersonal conflicts, marriage stress.
• Resentment about lack of time spent together with spouse after 20 years.
• Interpersonal relationships.
• I sacrifice personal time/needs for those of my family, but that takes a toll on me personally.
• Have you tried dating in this millennial age? Honesty, having a doctorate is intimidating to many folks.
• Working takes time from my kids and work makes me irritable at home.
• I’m not good at work-home life balance.
• Not being fully present when at home.

Theme 4: Health
This theme related to personal health and the health of others. Representative responses for this theme included:
• Depression, fatigue.
• Distance, apathy, exhaustion, depression.
• Fatigue.
• Lack of energy.
• Chronic pain that limits my ability to sleep long or well.
• Lack of exercise.
• Being too worn out to do what I want to do.
• Behavioral challenges—diet and exercise.
• Bad feelings, fatigue.
Theme 5: Striving for Perfection
This theme related to striving for perfection that meets an idealized state. Representative responses for this theme included:

• Focus on external expectations more than internal expectations.
• Duty to obligation.
• Work ethic and expectations.
• High expectations and many commitments.
• High career aspirations.
• My personal guilt.
• Fear.
• Obligations (real or perceived) to others.
• Societal pressures.
• Husband making me feel guilty.

Student Pharmacist responses for the question “What interferes with your ability to meet your expectations in your personal life?”

For comparison with pharmacist responses, student pharmacist responses for this question were categorized into the same five themes that emerged for pharmacist respondents: time management; finances; relationships; health; and striving for perfection. Their responses were in parallel themes to that of pharmacists, but were worded from their perspective as students.

Theme 1: Time Management
This theme related to managing time in order to get everything accomplished satisfactorily. Representative responses for this theme included:

• Not having time to recharge or spend with family.
• Professional endeavors taking too much of my time.
• Not enough time for hobbies or personal life.
• The amount of time and effort I have to put into my professional life.
• Too many commitments.
• Being a full-time student who also works part time makes it difficult to find the time to lead a healthy lifestyle.
• I often have to sacrifice time with friends or outdoor activities because of schoolwork.

Theme 2: Finances
This theme related to managing money and finances. Representative responses for this theme included:

• Don’t feel like I have time or money to buy and prepare healthy food.
• Loans.
• Finances.
• Financial stability.
• Money—we can’t do date nights, go on vacations, have nice things because I can barely afford rent.
• Low funds to be able to enjoy the city I live in and be comfortable.
• Resources.
• Student debt.
• Lack of car, transportation.

Theme 3: Relationships
This theme related to interpersonal relationships. Representative responses for this theme included:
• Distance from my family.
• Social life.
• Living away from my friends and family prevents me from spending as much time with them as I would like.
• I spend almost all of my time studying and I tend to neglect spending time with my husband.
• Trying to balance professional life with personal life.
• Not having enough time to spend with others.
• Chaos and disharmony.
• Opposite schedule from my family.
• When friends and I have disagreements.
• People who you don’t live well with.

Theme 4: Health
This theme related to personal health and the health of others. Representative responses for this theme included:
• Lack of energy.
• Exhaustion.
• Not enough sleep.
• Mental health.
• Having chronic illness.
• Low energy, feeling tired.
• When a family member becomes sick.
• Severe anxiety and depression.
• Not exercising, excessive worrying.
• Feeling overwhelmed and exhausted.
• Feeling tired or stressed.
• Mental illness.
Theme 5: Striving for Perfection

This theme related to striving for perfection that meets an idealized state. Representative responses for this theme included:

- Unclear plans.
- Having too many worries about life.
- Social anxieties.
- My own doubts and unrealistic expectations.
- My expectations in my professional life. I often put my professional commitments before my personal ones and this is detrimental to my balance.
- My lack of trusting people and the need to be in control of every aspect in my life.
- I lose sight of my motivation and become selfish.
- My own self.
- Trying to exceed expectations at work.
- Fear and low self-esteem.
- Lack of self-confidence.
- Distractions and fear.
- My own judgment and perception of myself and my abilities.
- Comparison.

Objective 3: Needs Related to Maintaining Satisfaction and Fulfillment

The third study objective was to describe needs related to maintaining satisfaction and fulfillment. Pharmacists and student pharmacists were asked to write their responses to the following questions:

- What needs do you have in your professional life that would enable you to achieve satisfaction and fulfillment?
- What needs do you have in your personal life that would enable you to achieve satisfaction and fulfillment?
- What are specific actions in your professional life that you could take to allow you to achieve satisfaction and fulfillment?
- What are specific actions in your personal life that you could take to allow you to achieve satisfaction and fulfillment?
Pharmacist responses for the question “What needs do you have in your professional life that would enable you to achieve satisfaction and fulfillment?”

For this question regarding the things that pharmacists view as needs for maintaining satisfaction and fulfillment in their professional life, pharmacist responses were categorized into four themes: time management; organizational support and recognition; freedom to pursue interests; and professional development.

**Theme 1: Time Management**
This theme related to managing time to get everything accomplished satisfactorily. Representative responses for this theme included:
- Less stress related to time commitments.
- Time to finish projects.
- A meal break.
- More time, better ancillary support.
- Tools that would cut down on time to complete tasks.
- More ways to carve out space for thinking.
- Better management of scheduling.
- More time to spend with patients and not being so stressed at work.

**Theme 2: Organizational Support and Recognition**
This theme related to how the organization is managed. Representative responses for this theme included:
- Better management and more patient-focused time.
- More highly trained and competent support staff to free me up for more professional interactions with my patients.
- Workplace staffing, organizational and workflow redesign.
- Pressure from management on making money for the company and rather an emphasis on helping patients achieve health care goals.
- A very quiet workspace will help my productivity.
- Further development of my team, more delegation, work efficiencies, and better management.
- Colleagues who are held accountable.
- Professional space at practice site is too noisy to get work done.
- Clear vision. Clear direction from management.
- Able to voice opinion to make things better for patients without being later singled out as a problem instead of being a proactive employee with positive ideas for the betterment of the company.
Theme 3: Freedom to Pursue Interests

This theme related to having freedom and flexibility to pursue own interests. Representative responses for this theme included:

• Ditching some of my responsibilities.
• I would love to have time to give each customer the time they deserve.
• More time to spend with patients.
• To practice as we were trained.
• Ability to focus on my own projects rather than those of others.
• I want to be able to practice my profession.
• Only taking on projects that interest me.
• Un-robotic-like work.
• Change my role to something more aligned with my passion for integrative health where I could see the impact of my work.
• Giving up my supervisory role and going back to being a staff clinical pharmacist.
• Ability to network more with other local pharmacists and hospital systems.
• Some form of independence to practice pharmacy ethically and professionally.
• Flexibility.
• I need to be able to practice in my way without being told where to stand.
• Ability to choose projects to work on (not have them assigned) based on my interests.
• More focus on what’s important.
• Time to teach and reflect.

Theme 4: Professional Development

This theme related to achieving professional development, self-actualization, recognition, and personal improvement. Representative responses for this theme included:

• A willingness of leadership to understand my professional goals and find ways to support me.
• Better training for me and my support team.
• Exerting an impact on the organization and the profession.
• Improved writing skills.
• Professional development is vital.
• Mentoring.
• Being included in decisions that impact my work.
• Ability to develop and grow as a pharmacist.
• Additional educational opportunities.
• Professional recognition.
• Positive reinforcement.
• Continuing education about leadership, managing other pharmacists, and career advice.
• Having someone who advocates for me.
• Interaction with a peer group.
• Job security.

**Student Pharmacist** responses for the question “What needs do you have in your professional life that would enable you to achieve satisfaction and fulfillment?”

For comparison with pharmacist responses, student pharmacist responses for this question were categorized into the same four themes that emerged for pharmacist respondents: time management; organizational support and recognition; freedom to pursue interests; and professional development. Their responses were in parallel themes to that of pharmacists, but were worded from their perspective as students.

**Theme 1: Time Management**

This theme related to managing time to get everything accomplished satisfactorily. Representative responses for this theme included:

• A few days off (not just the weekend) after each rotation to allow for wrap-up, moving, and getting prepared for the next rotation.
• Adequate time to make a difference.
• Time to spend with family.
• More sleep.
• Time management skills.
• Organization and consistency.

**Theme 2: Organizational Support and Recognition**

This theme related to how the organization is managed. Representative responses for this theme included:

• Adequate staffing.
• Increased pharmacist overlap at the pharmacy I work at.
• Better pharmacist/patient ratio.
• A better support team from higher up.
• Flexibility in work hours.
• A better manager.
Theme 3: Freedom to Pursue Interests
This theme related to having freedom and flexibility to pursue own interests. Representative responses for this theme included:

• The ability to say no to opportunities more often.
• More realistic expectations on rotations, more patient interaction rather than viewing entirely through a computer.
• Graduate and land a position that I want. Not one that I have to take.
• Application of clinical knowledge, impact on patient lives, and ability for growth.
• Ability to apply my skills and knowledge.
• Flexibility, being able to have different things to do every day, room for growth.
• I need time and space to grow and learn.
• Finding a job that allows me to help and educate patients.

Theme 4: Professional Development
This theme related to achieving professional development, self-actualization, recognition, and personal improvement. Representative responses for this theme included:

• A better way to control stress and anxiety.
• Being loan free.
• Securing a job when I graduate.
• Getting into a residency program.
• Supportive preceptors and classmates.
• Resources that provide details about pharmacy internships across the country.
• To have a better understanding of where I belong.
• Being in an environment in which new challenges are constantly arising.
• Confidence, finances, and connections.
• Validation from preceptors and mentors.
• A better exposure to the industry side of pharmaceuticals.
• More experience in different areas of pharmacy.
• A need for purpose. Why am I doing this?
• Networking. Mentors.
• More opportunities to be a leader.
• Connection with others. I often feel lonely and alone.
For this question regarding the things that pharmacists view as needs for achieving satisfaction and fulfillment in their personal life, pharmacist responses were categorized into four themes: time management; finances; relationships; and health.

**Theme 1: Time Management**
This theme related to managing time to get everything accomplished satisfactorily. Representative responses for this theme included:
- More time with family and friends.
- Time to relax more from work stress.
- Alone time, coffee, a clutter-free home.
- More vacation time.
- Get rid of some work that impinges on my personal life.
- Better balance.
- Time for new experiences, mostly travel.
- More time for hobbies and community service.
- Quiet time.
- I would like someone to cook for me and clean my house.
- Personal balance and development to purposefully prioritize responsibilities.
- Time for additional educational opportunities.

**Theme 2: Finances**
This theme related to managing money and finances. Representative responses for this theme included:
- Better financial planning.
- Techniques to quickly eliminate student loan debt.
- Financial security as I reach retirement age.
- More money or cutting back on expenses.
- Affirmation that my job is secure.
- Less expensive health insurance.
Theme 3: Relationships
This theme related to interpersonal relationships. Representative responses for this theme included:

- Faith, family support.
- Family happiness.
- Fantastic support system from my family.
- Social groups.
- Marital counseling.
- More attentive family members.
- Wider circle of supportive friends.
- Supportive partner, family, and friends.
- Love.
- People.

Theme 4: Health
This theme related to personal health and the health of others. Representative responses for this theme included:

- Improvement in health.
- Exercising and eating better.
- Proper sleep.
- More energy.
- Lose weight.

Student Pharmacist responses for the question “What needs do you have in your personal life that would enable you to achieve satisfaction and fulfillment?”

For comparison with pharmacist responses, student pharmacist responses for this question were categorized into the same four themes that emerged for pharmacist respondents: time management; finances; relationships; and health. Their responses were in parallel themes to that of pharmacists, but were worded from their perspective as students.

Theme 1: Time Management
This theme related to managing time to get everything accomplished satisfactorily. Representative responses for this theme included:

- Dedicate “me time” every day.
- More time to be home.
- More time to spend with people I love.
- Enough time for family and friends.
- Less being pulled in so many ways.
• Time management needs due to overflow of responsibilities in my professional life into my personal life.
• Having the confidence (and not the worry) to be able to take some time for myself to spend with friends and family.
• Time to explore new places.
• More quality time with my kids and wife.

**Theme 2: Finances**
This theme related to managing money and finances. Representative responses for this theme included:
• I need money, healthy food, and a car that doesn't worry me.
• No financial stress.
• Money to hire a maid.
• Financial stability.
• Financial responsibilities.
• A nice house and a good working vehicle.
• Not having to worry about income.
• Money.
• Security.
• Lower cost of living.
• Financial management.
• Loan forgiveness.

**Theme 3: Relationships**
This theme related to interpersonal relationships. Representative responses for this theme included:
• Living closer to my loved ones.
• Lasting friendships.
• My family and fiancé.
• Supportive loved ones.
• Christian community.
• Understanding from my friends at school.
• Kindness, helpfulness.
• Encouragement.
• A little more understanding and appreciation.
• I need more empathy from family members.
• Support and empowerment.
• Other individuals supportive of my goals.
• Love and support from significant other, family, and friends.
• To get married.
• Deeper relationships.
• Patience, understanding, forgiveness.
• Relationships so I’m not alone dealing with stress.
• Finding a wife and starting a family.

**Theme 4: Health**

This theme related to personal health and the health of others. Representative responses for this theme included:
• Getting the stress of school behind me will help me have time to relax again.
• Getting enough sleep.
• Empowering myself.
• Health care, self-care.
• Mental health support.
• Relaxation.
• Finding an outlet for my stress.
• Less stress.
• Rest, relaxation.
• Sleep, eating better, exercise, taking breaks to give my brain time to relax.
• Healthy diet and time to relax.
• Healthy balance.
• Self-care.
• I have health issues that I can only maintain with adequate rest, exercise, and personal care.
• Lose weight.
• Management of stress through yoga, spending time with family, being outdoors regularly.
• Mental health.
• Knowing my purpose for existing.
Pharmacist responses for the question “What are specific actions in your professional life that you could take to allow you to achieve satisfaction and fulfillment?”

For this question regarding the things that pharmacists view as actions they could take for achieving satisfaction and fulfillment in their professional life, pharmacist responses were categorized into three themes: time management; professional development; and mindfulness.

**Theme 1: Time Management**
This theme related to managing time to get everything accomplished satisfactorily. Representative responses for this theme included:

- Delegate work and responsibility.
- Put less pressure on myself to achieve every corporate goal at 100%.
- Setting times to work and sticking to that time frame.
- Say no to more things.
- Better work boundaries.
- Saying no to certain non-essential projects.
- Saying no. Not taking on new projects.
- Close for a 30-minute lunch break (but this would make people mad).
- Prioritizing certain tasks in order to have more time or energy for tasks which lead to satisfaction.
- Fewer meetings.
- Stop saying yes to everything.
- Try not to micromanage everyone so much.
- Get structure in my schedule.

**Theme 2: Professional Development**
This theme related to achieving professional development, self-actualization, recognition, and personal improvement. Representative responses for this theme included:

- Complete my diabetes educator training.
- Get a Master’s in Public Health.
- Complete an antibacterial stewardship training program.
- Provider status advocacy.
- Health policy advocacy.
- Find a new job.
- Ask for more opportunity.
- Keep working at expanding the network and support of the medication management consulting until I can find the right group to get it done.
• Get more certifications.
• Having other colleagues become more involved in national organizations.
• Advanced degree or certification.
• Get mentors and use my advanced medication skills more often during the day.
• Continuing education.
• Continue to apply for new jobs.
• Keep a focus on research and scholarship.
• Networking.
• Finish my PhD.
• Apply for a grant.
• Board certification.
• Better networking with local doctors.
• Discuss my needs with my boss.
• Write a plan about enhancing services.
• APhA Annual Meeting.

Theme 3: Mindfulness
This theme related to being intentional to practice mindfulness (moment-by-moment awareness of thoughts and feelings). Representative responses for this theme included:

• Mindfulness.
• Taking time to reflect on my day, how I feel, and why I feel that way.
• Avoid getting irritated or stressed when something interferes with my ability to complete a task on the schedule I want.
• Improving motivation and accountability.
• Let go of perfection, fix the issues and go on.
• Letting go.
• Living up to God’s standards such as being a good steward at work, being professional, helping and guiding.
• Staying positive when things get crazy.
• Positive attitude.
• Focus on God’s leading versus my view.
• See a therapist to achieve my goals.
• Teach, encourage, and set the right example for others. Pray for others.
• Be less obsessive-compulsive.
Student Pharmacist responses for the question “What are specific actions in your professional life that you could take to allow you to achieve satisfaction and fulfillment?”

For comparison with pharmacist responses, student pharmacist responses for this question were categorized into the same three themes that emerged for pharmacist respondents: time management; professional development; and mindfulness. Their responses were in parallel themes to that of pharmacists, but were worded from their perspective as students.

**Theme 1: Time Management**
This theme related to managing time in order to get everything accomplished satisfactorily. Representative responses for this theme included:
- Give people honest wait time even if it is 2 hours.
- Prioritize tasks.
- Specific daily timelines.
- Work smarter, not harder.
- Set personal deadlines.
- Saying no to more activities.
- Better time management.
- Revamp the way I schedule tasks.
- No working on the weekends.
- Learning more efficiently.
- Plan better.
- Sleep more.
- Focus on one task at a time.
- Not procrastinating.
- Being more organized.

**Theme 2: Professional Development**
This theme related to achieving professional development, self-actualization, recognition, and personal improvement. Representative responses for this theme included:
- Study more.
- Find an area of pharmacy that stands out to me so I can embrace my calling.
- More school-led trips to apply learned knowledge.
- Ignore pressures, focus on what I want out of the career.
- Networking.
- Reach out to more people who have been in my position.
• Continue with residency training.
• Setting expectations early and letting my preceptors know what I need to
  succeed most.
• Working on addressing areas in which I am lacking knowledge.
• More certifications.
• Building confidence by throwing myself into uncomfortable situations.
• Improve communication skills, work more, practice.
• Residency training.
• Talking to my professors before things start to look hopeless.
• Read more literature.
• Present at a major conference.
• Outreach and network.

Theme 3: Mindfulness
This theme related to being intentional to practice mindfulness (moment-by-
moment awareness of thoughts and feelings). Representative responses for this
theme included:
• Taking small moments to just breathe and re-collect myself and maybe
  ask for help if I am too overwhelmed.
• I could do more community service. It would make me feel better.
• Take each task one step at a time, pay attention to details, and carefully
  treat patient in best way possible.
• Volunteering.
• Learn strategies to cope with stress and anxiety.
• Become more patient.
• Changing my attitude.
• Expressing ideas in a calm and professional way that is non-accusing.
Pharmacist responses for the question “What are specific actions in your personal life that you can take to allow you to achieve satisfaction and fulfillment?”

For this question regarding the things that pharmacists view as actions they could take for achieving satisfaction and fulfillment in their personal life, pharmacist responses were categorized into three themes: time management; professional development; and mindfulness.

**Theme 1: Time Management**
This theme related to managing time to get everything accomplished satisfactorily. Representative responses for this theme included:
- Take time off to focus on having a family.
- Stop bringing work home.
- Disconnect from work when out of work.
- Intentionally take time to do things that I know are life giving.
- Prioritize personal life over work more.
- Ensuring I have balance.
- Better maintain my calendar and know when to say no.
- Schedule me time.
- Make for time for things that are meaningful to me.

**Theme 2: Professional Development**
This theme related to achieving professional development, self-actualization, recognition, and personal improvement. Representative responses for this theme included:
- Be braver.
- Design a financial plan to achieve my long-term goals.
- Build strong relationships with the community.
- Refocus my life direction.
- Go back to school and take some additional classes in philosophy and psychology.
- Join a community group.
- Be more disciplined financially.
- Board certification.
- Get engaged with Unity community.
- Improving emotional, physical, and spiritual health.
- Shed the fear to identify specifically what creates happiness and joy in my life. Force myself to focus on this topic.
- Study God’s word and desire him over everything else.
- Worship God more.
- Take an online class.
Theme 3: Mindfulness
This theme related to being intentional to practice mindfulness (moment-by-moment awareness of thoughts and feelings). Representative responses for this theme included:
• Be kind.
• Relaxation techniques.
• Work on positivity and gratitude (i.e., mindfulness).
• Mindfulness.
• Meditation, yoga, creating a “me” time if just for 15–30 minutes.
• Feed mind, body, soul.
• Be present, not perfect (lower my expectations).
• Find support group or therapist to assist with coping of family stressors.
• Use cognitive behavioral therapy to improve sleep.
• Pray. Plan. Focus. Enjoy following the dream.
• Meditating at least 5 minutes a day with my calm.com app.
• Continue to practice being present in the moment.
• Attend my therapy sessions regularly.
• Church.
• Give love to get love.
• Spend more time praying, meditating, talking to God.
• Take one day at a time.
• Get up early to have quiet time by myself in the morning.
• Be present.

Student Pharmacist responses for the question “What are specific actions in your personal life that you could take to allow you to achieve satisfaction and fulfillment?”

For comparison with pharmacist responses, student pharmacist responses for this question were categorized into the same three themes that emerged for pharmacist respondents: time management; professional development; and mindfulness. Their responses were in parallel themes to that of pharmacists, but were worded from their perspective as students.

Theme 1: Time Management
This theme related to managing time to get everything accomplished satisfactorily. Representative responses for this theme included:
• Take off more time with knowing I could lose my job.
• Sleeping more.
• Sleep less.
• Sleep. I need sleep.
• Do chores in small amounts daily so they don’t add up.
• Specific daily timelines.
• Do not become entrenched in procrastination.
• Better time management.
• Declutter my calendar for only events that I find enjoyment.
• Taking more time for myself.
• Spend more time with friends and family.
• Spend more time doing productive things.
• Keep a planner.
• Make time for myself to relax.
• Spending more time doing things that make me happy.
• Turn off cell phone.

Theme 2: Professional Development
This theme related to achieving professional development, self-actualization, recognition, and personal improvement. Representative responses for this theme included:
• Get healthier, eat better, exercise more.
• Not be in debt.
• Talk to a trusted advisor.
• Express my plans in advance to avoid personal and academic conflicts.
• I need to get professional help for my mental health.
• Graduate and pass NAPLEX.
• Utilize a budget.
• Engage in community.
• Find new hobbies.
• Kick my bad habits.
• Removing myself from negative situations.
• Building my network of people.
• Exercise.
• Financial stability.
• Read the Bible or call up a friend or family member and talk about life—not pharmacy school.
• Continue to work on my personal health.
• Surround myself with the right people for support.
• Learning more every day.
• Run for office.
• Be more outgoing, networking.
• Not to settle when trying to achieve my dream.
Theme 3: Mindfulness

This theme related to being intentional to practice mindfulness (moment-by-moment awareness of thoughts and feelings). Representative responses for this theme included:

• I need to realize what I have in my life is positive.
• Prayer has been a major part of my life. Taking the time to stop and talk to God helps me refocus on what is really important and the motivation for why I do what I do.
• Be more understanding and patient with the process.
• Live in the moment.
• Taking time to realize that not everything revolves around my personal life.
• Relaxation.
• Clear mindset.
• Having more patience, being more understanding.
• Put aside all thoughts of negativity and continue striving to be the best version of myself.
• Being intentional in my actions even when I am tired.
• Expressing ideas and feelings in a way that is non-accusing.
Discussion

APhA developed a project designed to examine and report findings on the views and perceptions of pharmacists on their individual:

- Aspects of life and experiences that provide professional and personal satisfaction and fulfillment.
- Causes of stress—both professional and personal.
- Needs related to maintaining professional and personal satisfaction and fulfillment.

Since there is evidence that stress levels are rising for student pharmacists, they were included in this project as well.56

**Objective 1: Satisfaction and Fulfillment**

A summary of findings for the two questions related to the first objective are presented in Table 1. The same themes emerged for both pharmacists (n = 380) and student pharmacists (n = 332).

**Table 1: Summary of Themes Associated With Satisfaction and Fulfillment**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What are positive things in your professional life that give you satisfaction and fulfillment?</th>
<th>What are positive things in your personal life that give you satisfaction and fulfillment?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Theme 1: Helping Patients Achieve Clinical Outcomes</td>
<td>• Theme 1: Relationships With Family and Friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Theme 2: Relationships With Colleagues and Patient Care Teams</td>
<td>• Theme 2: Activities That Rejuvenate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Theme 3: Mentoring, Advising, and Teaching Others</td>
<td>• Theme 3: Purpose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Theme 4: Making a Difference/Effecting Change</td>
<td>• Theme 4: Stability and Security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Theme 5: Professional Development, Recognition, and Self-Actualization</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Regarding positive things that give satisfaction and fulfillment in respondents’ professional lives, the five themes we identified were consistent with previously published literature and the principles of Herzberg’s two-factor theory in which determiners of job satisfaction include: achievement, recognition, the work itself, responsibility, and advancement.21,28,63 Regarding positive things that give satisfaction and fulfillment in respondents’ personal lives, the four themes we identified were consistent with previously published work such as Maslow’s hierarchy of needs theory and Seligman’s PERMA model.64-66 Maslow described five levels of needs (physiological, safety, love and belongingness, self-esteem, and self-actualization) for which base needs
(thirst, hunger) must be met before one can recognize or pursue the next higher need in the hierarchy. Our findings show that the respondents have basic needs met and are focusing on higher level needs such as love and belongingness, self-esteem, and self-actualization. The PERMA model provides insight regarding how one can flourish through positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment. The findings from our study are consistent with these principles.

Based on the findings for the aspects of life and experiences that provide professional and personal satisfaction or fulfillment, it appears that pharmacists and student pharmacists are able to recognize and pursue achievement, recognition, responsibility, advancement, relationships, self-esteem, self-actualization, meaning, and accomplishment in both their professional and personal lives.

**Objective 2: Causes of Stress**

A summary of findings for the four questions related to the second objective are presented in Table 2. The same themes emerged for both pharmacists (n = 380) and student pharmacists (n = 332).

**Table 2: Summary of Themes Associated With Causes of Stress**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What are the things that you view as specific stressors in your professional life?</th>
<th>What are the things that you view as specific stressors in your personal life?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Theme 1: Time Management</td>
<td>• Theme 1: Time Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Theme 2: Organizational Management</td>
<td>• Theme 2: Finances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Theme 3: Angry/Abusive Customers/Patients</td>
<td>• Theme 3: Relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Theme 4: Fear of Failure/Inadequacy</td>
<td>• Theme 4: Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Theme 5: Inadequate Recognition</td>
<td>• Theme 5: Striving for Perfection</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What interferes with your ability to meet your expectations in your professional life?</th>
<th>What interferes with your ability to meet your expectations in your personal life?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Theme 1: Time Management</td>
<td>• Theme 1: Time Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Theme 2: Organizational Management</td>
<td>• Theme 2: Finances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Theme 3: Relationships</td>
<td>• Theme 3: Relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Theme 4: Health</td>
<td>• Theme 4: Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Theme 5: Striving for Perfection</td>
<td>• Theme 5: Striving for Perfection</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Regarding professional stressors, respondents’ comments were categorized into five themes (Table 2), which were consistent with previously published literature and the principles of Herzberg’s two-factor theory in which determiners of job dissatisfaction include: company policies, supervision, interpersonal relations, working conditions, and salary/recognition.2-20,29-52,63 Regarding the question about what interferes with respondents’ ability to meet expectations in their professional lives, two other themes emerged—namely, health and striving for perfection. Comments with respect to health oftentimes related to not having time to maintain a healthy lifestyle, being lonely, suffering anxiety and depression, and mental fatigue. Comments with respect to striving for perfection oftentimes related to feeling pressure to follow norms, not meeting expectations, feeling inadequate, experiencing imposter syndrome, worrying about the political and social climate, coping with pollution, feeling guilt, and dealing with negative effects of social media.

We propose that these findings might be associated with the notion of workism that has emerged in current society. Workism, as Thompson conceives, is the “belief that work is not only necessary to economic production, but also the centerpiece of one’s identity and life’s purpose; and the belief that any policy to promote human welfare must always encourage more work.”67 To put it another way, we don’t work to live but rather live to work. Thompson states that “a culture that funnels its dreams of self-actualization into salaried jobs is setting itself up for collective anxiety, mass disappointment, and inevitable burnout.”67 Many people in the workforce have passed through a childhood of extracurricular achievement and checked every box of the success sequence.67 They have been told that their work should be their passion, they should change the world, and they should not give up until they find the job they love.67 Furthermore, Thompson argues, American Millennials (now the largest segment of the workforce at 56 million strong) have been collectively defined by two external traumas. The first is student debt, which has tripled in the past 12 years without significant salary increases. The second has been the disturbance of social media, which has amplified the pressure to craft an image of success to others.67 Social media and other computer use are being linked to dehumanization and other psychological impacts, information anxiety, job stress, relationship problems, and occupational problems.68

We propose that workism might be an emergent stressor in the pharmacist workforce. In addition, the five themes that we identified related to one’s personal life (time, finances, relationships, health, striving for perfection) are consistent with this notion of workism as well. Work can easily become the centerpiece of one’s identity and life’s purpose since electronic connectivity is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week—and there is societal pressure to associate one’s dreams of self-actualization into our jobs. Our time, finances, relationships, health, and striving for perfection are all viewed through the lens of our work.
Objective 3: Needs Related to Maintaining Satisfaction and Fulfillment

A summary of findings for the four questions related to the third objective are presented in Table 3. The same themes emerged for both pharmacists (n = 380) and student pharmacists (n = 332).

Table 3: Summary of Themes Associated With Needs Related to Maintaining Satisfaction and Fulfillment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What needs do you have in your professional life that would enable you to achieve satisfaction and fulfillment?</th>
<th>What needs do you have in your personal life that would enable you to achieve satisfaction and fulfillment?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Theme 1: Time Management</td>
<td>• Theme 1: Time Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Theme 2: Organizational Support and Recognition</td>
<td>• Theme 2: Finances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Theme 3: Freedom to Pursue Interests</td>
<td>• Theme 3: Relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Theme 4: Professional Development</td>
<td>• Theme 4: Health</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What are specific actions in your professional life that you could take to allow you to achieve satisfaction and fulfillment?</th>
<th>What are specific actions in your personal life that you could take to allow you to achieve satisfaction and fulfillment?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Theme 1: Time Management</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Theme 2: Professional Development</td>
<td>• Theme 2: Professional Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Theme 3: Mindfulness</td>
<td>• Theme 3: Mindfulness</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Regarding needs related to maintaining professional satisfaction and fulfillment, respondents’ comments were categorized into four themes (Table 3), which were consistent with previously published literature and the principles of Herzberg’s two-factor theory in which determiners of job dissatisfaction (company policies, supervision, interpersonal relations, working conditions, and salary/recognition) should be addressed and in which determiners of job satisfaction (achievement, recognition, the work itself, responsibility, and advancement) should be enhanced.21-28,63

Regarding needs related to maintaining personal satisfaction and fulfillment, respondents’ comments were categorized into four themes (Table 3), which were four of the five themes in Table 2 relating to personal stressors. Thus, it appears that overcoming workism could be a need for pharmacists and student pharmacists in maintaining personal satisfaction and fulfillment.
The last question we asked related to specific actions one could take for achieving professional and personal satisfaction and fulfillment. For each area, three themes emerged: time management, professional development, and mindfulness. We view these as related to societal-level actions (time management associated with workism that has emerged in society), organizational-level actions (professional development), and personal-level actions (mindfulness) that could help pharmacists and student pharmacists be resilient and thrive. The concept of thriving refers to “a person’s ability to go beyond his or her original level of functioning and to grow and function despite repeated exposure to stressful experiences.” Resilience and thriving are characterized by positive self-esteem, hardness, strong coping skills, a sense of coherence, self-efficacy, optimism, strong social resources, adaptability, risk-taking, low fear of failure, determination, perseverance, and a high tolerance for uncertainty.

Limitations

When applying the findings of this study, its limitations should be acknowledged. First, the sample of pharmacists and student pharmacists was derived from a list maintained by APhA and did not include every pharmacist or student pharmacist in the United States. The demographic profiles showed that a large representation of pharmacists and student pharmacists was achieved, which is desired for generic qualitative research. Another limitation is the qualitative method we used for collecting and analyzing data. Generic qualitative research collects data from a large representation of the population of interest to get a broad range of opinions, ideas, or reflections about people’s experiences and perceptions. This differs from many qualitative approaches in which relatively small numbers of people are studied in depth through detailed interviews, storytelling narratives, or focus groups. Thus, our findings represent a broad range of experiences and perceptions rather than an in-depth understanding of phenomena.

Finally, subgroup analysis was not conducted in this study. Investigating unique patterns of responses for students, people who are caregivers, or people who work in a certain practice setting or in a unique role (such as academia) could be of interest. We did not conduct those analyses to meet the objectives of this study.
Conclusions and Recommendations

APhA developed a project designed to examine and report findings on the views and perceptions of pharmacists on their individual:

- Aspects of life and experiences that provide professional and personal satisfaction and fulfillment.
- Causes of stress—both professional and personal.
- Needs related to maintaining professional and personal satisfaction and fulfillment.

Since there is evidence that stress levels are rising for student pharmacists, they were included in this project as well.

The findings showed that pharmacists and student pharmacists identified similar themes for what brings satisfaction, what causes stress, and what they need to maintain satisfaction and fulfillment. Most of the themes fit well with findings presented in the literature, Herzberg’s two-factor theory, Maslow’s hierarchy of needs theory, and Seligman’s PERMA model. Specifically, pharmacists’ and student pharmacists’ basic human needs are being met, which allows them to recognize and pursue higher-order needs related to achievement, recognition, responsibility, advancement, relationships, self-esteem, self-actualization, meaning, and accomplishment in both their professional and personal lives.

The stressors and the needs for action to achieve resilience and thriving related to themes at the societal, organizational, and personal levels. Our recommendations follow these themes.

**Recommendation 1: Societal-Level Considerations**

At the societal level, respondents reported the challenges of: not having time to maintain a healthy lifestyle, being lonely, suffering anxiety and depression, having mental fatigue, striving for perfection, feeling pressure to follow norms, not meeting expectations, feeling inadequate, experiencing imposter syndrome, worrying about the political and social climate, feeling guilt, and dealing with the negative effects of social media. We group these at the societal level because these are connected with the phenomenon called workism, which is “belief that work is not only necessary to economic production, but also the centerpiece of one’s identity and life’s purpose.” Many people in the workforce feel societal pressure to make their work their passion, that they should change the world through their work, and that they should not give up until they find the job they love. Additionally, student debt has tripled in the past 12 years without significant salary increases. Furthermore, there has been the disturbance of social media, which has amplified the pressure to craft an image of success to others. It has dehumanized interactions and created information anxiety since online connections never sleep and are accessible at all times. We propose that the notion of workism might be an emergent stressor in the pharmacist
workforce. Work can easily become the centerpiece of one’s identity and life’s purpose since electronic connectivity is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week—and there is societal pressure to associate one’s dreams of self-actualization into our jobs. Our time, finances, relationships, health, and striving for perfection are all viewed through the lens of our work.

Thus, our first recommendation relates to considering societal-level changes with respect to workism. Professional organizations and educational institutions need to acknowledge how they contribute to unhealthy workism and need to be intentional about helping pharmacists and student pharmacists overcome the temptation to fall into the belief that one’s job is the centerpiece of one’s identity and life’s purpose. Research shows that valuing time over money uniquely contributes to well-being and happiness, in part by encouraging intrinsic motivation.70 Time away from the workplace to focus on relationships, hobbies, and purposeful activities is imperative.

**Recommendation 2: Organizational-Level Considerations**

At the organizational level, respondents often described stress and what they need to overcome stress in terms of: unreasonable corporate demands, fear of failure, lack of support, lack of respect, technology overload, bureaucracy, and lack of freedom to practice as desired. We group these at the organizational level because they are consistent with the concept of moral distress, which occurs when a worker knows an ethical dilemma is at stake and knows the morally right thing to do, but institutional constraints make it impossible to pursue the desired course of action.50 Resilience is recognized as a key requisite for coping with moral distress by focusing on personal characteristics, workplace characteristics, and social networks for support.53,54 However, proceedings of a recent workshop on a design thinking, systems approach to well-being within education and practice recommended that “while helping individuals cope is worthy of time and attention, health professionals must put more focus on changing the system itself.... The system itself seems to be getting off easy and deserves more heat.”48

Thus, our second recommendation relates to considering organizational-level changes with respect to moral distress. Pharmacy and health care organizations need to acknowledge that financial considerations in health care provision, documentation burdens, pressure to meet production metrics, and the constant specter of litigation distract from patient-centered care and lead to conflicts of interest and moral distress for practitioners.49 This recommendation does not pertain only to pharmacy—the whole health system is broken in this regard.
**Recommendation 3: Individual-Level Considerations**

At the *individual level*, respondents often described what they need to overcome stress in terms of being: kind, relaxed, mindful, positive, grateful, in a support group, in prayer, in meditation, in church, loving, present, in relationship with God, in the moment, focused on what is really important, intentional, patient, coping, calm, encouraging, and less obsessive-compulsive. Many of these descriptions are consistent with the notions of *resilience and thriving*, which Ledesma defines as “a person’s ability to go beyond his or her original level of functioning and to grow and function despite repeated exposure to stressful experiences.”69 Thriving is characterized by self-esteem, hardiness, coping, coherence, self-efficacy, optimism, social support, adaptability, risk-taking, low fear of failure, determination, perseverance, and a high tolerance for uncertainty.69

Thus, our third recommendation relates to individual-level support for improving resilience and thriving even in stressful situations. Pharmacists should acknowledge the practices of self-care and peer support as important tools for fostering resilience and thriving.47 A recent survey of physicians47 showed that 28% believe that individual responses to reduce clinician burnout are ineffective—it is primarily a system issue. Nonetheless, well-being and resilience should be considered jointly to represent how individuals are doing now and how well they are prepared for the future.55

**Summary**

The findings of this project showed that pharmacists’ and student pharmacists’ basic human needs are being met, which allows them to recognize and pursue higher-order needs related to achievement, recognition, responsibility, advancement, relationships, self-esteem, self-actualization, meaning, and accomplishment in both their professional and personal lives. To improve well-being and resilience for pharmacist professionals, there is a need to address the societal-level phenomenon of *workism* in which work becomes the centerpiece of one’s identity and life’s purpose and creates a myopic view of our time, finances, relationships, health, and fulfillment through the lens of our work.

There is also a need to address the organizational-level phenomenon of *moral distress* in which financial considerations in health care provision, documentation burdens, pressure to meet production metrics, and the constant specter of litigation distract from patient-centered care and lead to conflicts of interest. Health care practitioners face moral distress when they know an ethical dilemma is at stake and they know the morally right thing to do, but organizational constraints make it impossible to pursue the desired course of action.
Finally, there is a need to address the individual-level phenomena of resilience and thriving in which societal, organizational, self-care, and social support contribute to a person being able to go beyond his or her original level of functioning and to grow and function despite repeated exposure to stressful experiences. Characteristics that support this relate to self-esteem, hardiness, coping, coherence, self-efficacy, optimism, adaptability, risk-taking, determination, perseverance, and a tolerance for uncertainty. Nonetheless, well-being and resilience should be considered jointly to represent how individuals are doing now and how well they are prepared for the future.

These recommendations are beyond the scope of one organization such as APhA. However, these recommendations can help frame discussions and deliberations as APhA works as a network organization within the National Academy of Medicine Action Collaborative on Clinician Well-Being and Resilience.
Current Views and Perceptions in the Pharmacy Profession on Well-Being and Resilience by Pharmacists and Student Pharmacists

References


