



Evaluation of Medical Science Liaisons' Perception of Job Satisfaction and Career Path Options

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Introduction

A medical science liaison (MSL) is a field-based therapeutic specialist employed by a pharmaceutical company, often possessing advanced scientific training and degrees. The MSL serves as a catalyst for collaboration between a pharmaceutical company and external thought leaders.¹ Responsibilities of a MSL may include establishing and cultivating relationships with key opinion leaders, supporting the medical needs of a therapeutic area, disseminating medical information, facilitating the clinical research process, and collecting competitive information from the field.^{2,3} The MSL position is relatively new to the pharmaceutical industry and little has been done to characterize or document trends in this population.

Objective

To evaluate job satisfaction and career path opportunities among PharmDs who currently hold or have previously held a MSL position.

Methodology

Design:

A survey was distributed electronically via Zoomerang to alumni of the Rutgers Pharmaceutical Industry Fellowship (RPIF) program. Questions centered on demographics, job satisfaction, and career path opportunities. Survey participation was optional, and responses remained confidential and anonymous. Surveys were open for completion from October 14th to November 9th, 2005. Electronic reminders were sent out on Nov 1st and 7th. Telephone reminders were made on Nov 8th.

Population:

Approximately 300 RPIF alumni. Only those alumni who are now (or have been in the past) employed as a MSL were asked to complete the survey.

Analysis:

All analysis of survey results was completed by the study authors by Nov 21st, 2005.

Materials:

- > RPIF database
- > 23 question survey (7 background, 10 job satisfaction, and 6 career path questions)
- > Zoomerang Surveys @ www.zoomerang.com

Results – Career Path†

The total number of respondents was 38, of which 5 have moved on to other positions within their respective companies such as:

- > Executive Director, Scientific Affairs
- > Principal & CEO of a consulting business
- > Regional Sales Director
- > Director of Marketing
- > Manager of Medical Science Liaisons

(†n = 5)

Results - Job Satisfaction*

Figure 1: Factors Influencing Decision To Pursue A MSL Position

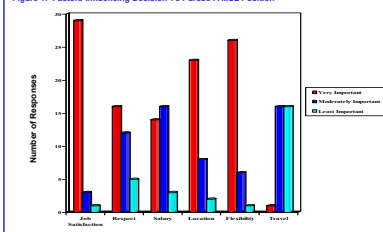


Figure 2: Average Work Hours Per Week

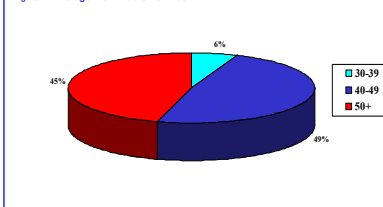


Figure 3: Time Spent In The Work Force Post-RPIF Prior To Employment As A MSL

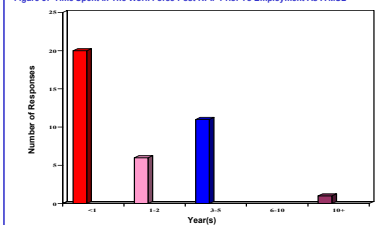


Figure 4: Annual Compensation (In US Dollars)

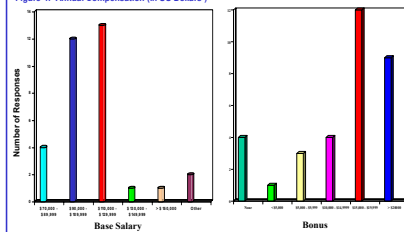


Figure 5: Stress Level At Work

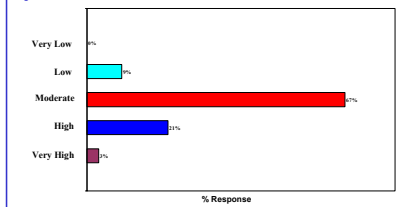
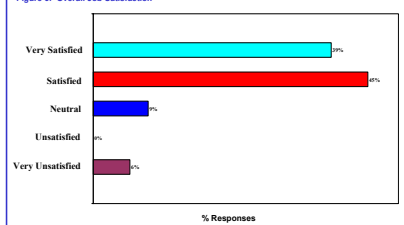


Figure 6: Overall Job Satisfaction



(†n = 33)

Discussion

38 of 40 RPIF alumni who are currently (or have been in the past) employed as a MSL responded to the survey. Of the 38 respondents, 33 currently work as MSLs and 5 have moved on to other positions within their respective companies.

The survey results revealed the following:

- > Job satisfaction, location, and flexibility ranked high when evaluating MSL positions
- > Almost all (94%) of the respondents reported that they work more than 40 hours a week, and 45% of respondents reported working greater than 50 hours a week
- > Respondents indicated that they travel frequently, with more than 90% indicating that they spend more than 20% of their time traveling on business
- > The majority of MSLs earn an annual base salary of \$110,000 - \$129,999
- > 29 of 33 (88%) of respondents reported receiving an annual bonus. The most frequently reported range was \$15,000 - \$19,999.
- > 67% of respondents reported a moderate stress level (on a 5-point scale) as a MSL
- > 94% of RPIF alumni who are currently MSLs reported that they are either satisfied or very satisfied in their position
- > Almost all (37 of 38) respondents were employed in their first MSL job within 5 years of completing the RPIF program. 20 of 38 respondents accepted a MSL position less than one year after completing the RPIF program

Limitations

Limitations of this study include:

- > Only RPIF alumni were surveyed. MSLs who are not RPIF alumni were not surveyed
- > Survey results from RPIF alumni who are MSLs may not be representative of the entire MSL population
- > The survey results are limited to 38 respondents

Conclusions

The results of this study demonstrate that many alumni of the RPIF program have successfully obtained MSL positions within one year of completing the program. The majority of RPIF alumni who are MSLs have chosen these positions based on job satisfaction, flexibility, and salary. RPIF alumni holding MSL positions have a high job satisfaction, and some have pursued a variety of career path options, including management and consulting opportunities.

References

1. Chin JY. "Medical science liaisons: an overview." Medical Science Liaison Quarterly 2000
2. Rutgers Pharmaceutical Industry Fellowship website: <http://pharmafellows.rutgers.edu>
3. Data on File, Institute for Pharmaceutical Industry Fellowships, Ernest Mario School of Pharmacy, Rutgers University

Disclosure

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