To compare the perceptions of community pharmacy practice employers and fourth professional year pharmacy students (P4) on the current community pharmacy practice job market

BACKGROUND

A full-time pharmacist position in community pharmacy practice (e.g., chain, independent, mass merchant, etc.) was once commonly thought to be guaranteed upon graduation from pharmacy school. However, the implications of these economic times in light of the growing number of pharmacy schools and a steady rise in professional pharmacy student enrollment are not fully understood.

According to the latest data from the Aggregate Demand Index (ADI) supported by the Pharmacy Manpower Project, there is a nationwide moderate demand for pharmacists in 36 states. In the state of NJ, the ADI reflects a balance between pharmacists and positions available. Given the current economic time and shrinking budgets, a full-time pharmacist position in community pharmacy practice may be difficult to obtain as compared to previous years.

METHODS

A paper-based survey, consisting of multiple-choice and Likert scale questions/answers was disseminated to P4 interview candidates and pharmacy practice employers. The survey was administered to participants at the Community Pharmacy Practice Interview Day at The Ernest Mario School of Pharmacy, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey.

Surveys assessed employers’ and students’ perceptions of the following areas: application/hiring processes, applicant attributes and skills, job availabilities and potential impact of emerging pharmacy schools.

For the purpose of this study, all participants were asked to provide their opinions on the current community pharmacy job market within NJ.

OBJECTIVE

To compare the perceptions of community pharmacy practice employers and fourth professional year pharmacy students (P4) on the current community pharmacy practice job market

RESULTS

In total, 91 employers and 50 students participated in the survey. Special thanks to Dr. James Alexander, PharmD for his assistance in distributing the survey and to Dr. Joseph A. Barone, PharmD, FCCP for their support and guidance.

DISCUSSION

Both employers and students had perceptions that the current job market in NJ has a moderate demand for pharmacists. In reality, the data shows NJ is in balance with jobs available and the number of pharmacists.

Factors that influence these perceptions may include increased number of graduate applications noted by employers, emerging pharmacy schools in the tri-state area (West, South). Most employers believed multiple candidates are willing to relocate outside of NJ than in past years.

Both groups agreed that best time for a P4 student to apply for a full-time pharmacist position would be the fall (Sept.-Dec.) prior to graduation.