

Impact of Fellows' Rotational Experiences on Career Selection upon Completion of the Rutgers Pharmaceutical Industry Fellowship (RPIF) Program

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INTRODUCTION

The Rutgers Pharmaceutical Industry Fellowship (RPIF) Program is designed to foster the growth and development of future pharmaceutical industry professionals through 1- and 2-year fellowships in various functional areas such as Clinical Research, Marketing, Marketing Research, Medical Affairs, Medical Information, Medical Education, and Regulatory Affairs, among others. Since 1984, the program has grown significantly and now includes 12 different pharmaceutical companies with approximately 500 program alumni.

Some Post-Doctoral fellows can explore other areas of interest outside their core department through rotational components. The experiences obtained through these rotations may impact career path choices upon completion of the RPIF Program.

OBJECTIVE

To evaluate the impact of fellowship rotational experiences outside of a core department on career path choices and opportunities upon completion of the RPIF Program.

METHODOLOGY

A comprehensive 12 question survey was administered via Zoomerang™ to retrospectively evaluate RPIF Program alumni who completed the fellowship program between 2004 and 2008. They were given 14 days to complete the confidential survey with an email reminder 3 days before the survey deadline.

Overall, 38.6% of surveyed RPIF Program alumni responded to the survey.

The following definitions were used for the purposes of this study:

- **Core Department**- the department where the fellow began the RPIF Program
- **Rotation**- at least one month experience outside of core department

RESULTS

85 out of 220 RPIF Program alumni completed the survey. Of those, 42 were offered a rotational component and 38 completed a rotation during their fellowship.

Through the examined years, rotational components were increasingly offered in the RPIF Program (Figure 1). Most fellowships that offered a rotational component were 2-year programs (Figure 2).

Of the RPIF Program alumni that completed a rotation, 52.5% completed 1 rotation, 37% completed 2 rotations, and 10.5% completed 3 or more rotations during their fellowship (Figure 3).

76% of respondents who completed a rotation reported that the rotational component influenced their career path choices upon completion of the RPIF Program (Figure 4). 68% of respondents who completed a rotation reported that the rotational component had helped them to obtain their first position upon completion of the RPIF Program.

Immediately upon completion of the RPIF Program, 50% (19 of 38) of those who completed a rotation accepted a full time position in the same discipline in which they completed a rotational component. 45% (17 of 38) of those who completed a rotation currently hold a position in the same discipline in which they completed a rotational component.

Seven respondents reported a pivotal experience of short duration (< 1 month) that impacted their career choices. Five reported having a Medical Science Liaison shadowing experience and two identified an impactful meeting between multidisciplinary functions.

Figure 1: Increasing Trend of Rotations Offered

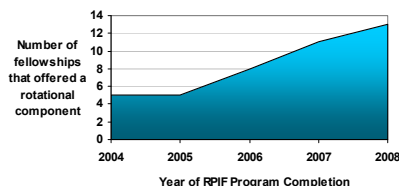


Figure 2: Did Your Fellowship Offer a Rotational Component?

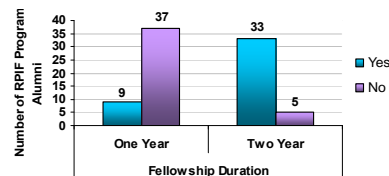


Figure 3: Number of Rotations Completed

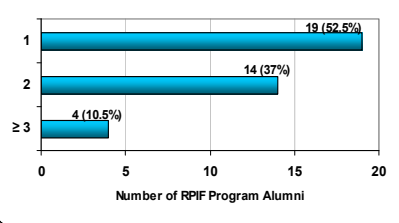
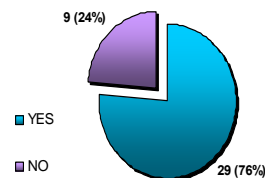


Figure 4: Did the Rotational Component Influence Your Career Path Choice?



DISCUSSION

The majority of respondents who completed a rotation found that the rotational component influenced their career path choices and helped them obtain their first position upon completion of the RPIF Program.

Fellowships of two-year duration were found to be more likely to offer rotational opportunities. Increasingly, fellowships within the RPIF program are trending towards offering a rotational component.

It appears that even a short term experience can have a positive impact.

CONCLUSION

Rotations outside of core fellowship areas have a significant impact on career decisions. Even rotations of short duration can have a positive influence.

When possible, rotational components should be incorporated into the fellowship experience.

The RPIF Program will continue to encourage fellows to explore opportunities outside of their core department when offered.

LIMITATIONS

Limitations of this study included:

- Of 220 sampled RPIF Program alumni, only 85 responded which may be attributed to incorrect email addresses.
- Of 85 respondents, 82 completed the survey

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS / DISCLOSURES

The authors thank all those that participated in the survey. All authors are paid employees of Rutgers University, Ernest Mario School of Pharmacy.