

# A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A CLINICAL PHARMACIST

Sharing experiences from alumni



My journey as a pharmacist began at University of Manchester, United Kingdom back in 2002. After four exhilarating years, I graduated with a Master of Pharmacy (Hons). Soon after, I started working as a Provisional Registered Pharmacist in Hospital Tg. Ampuan Afzan, Pahang. Fast forward 10 years, I then had the desire to further my studies. I obtained Master of Clinical Pharmacy from Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) in 2016. Those 18 months of study at UiTM were indeed memorable and instrumental in preparing me for where I am now.

I have the incredible honor of serving as one of the clinical pharmacists in the 60-bed Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) and Special Care Nursery (SCN) of Hospital Putrajaya since 2018. I work alongside a great and highly committed team that cares for neonates who were born prematurely with complications, malformations, or other medical issues. These neonates deserve to be given the utmost care before continuing their journey outside the hospital doors or receiving the final caring touch before their last breath.

On a typical day, I arrive at the hospital around 7.30 a.m. As I am also the Head of the Unit of Ward Pharmacy and Clinical Pharmacokinetics, I carry out administrative work in the morning. I will never know how the day will unfold in the NICU. I begin reviewing the overnight notes, and these will usually indicate whether things are off to a peaceful start or shaping up to be a hectic day.

Shortly by 9 a.m., I start following rounds with the NICU team which includes the neonatologist, specialists, medical officers, nurses, and medical assistants. My biggest responsibility as a NICU pharmacist is the provision of medication information to ensure optimal pharmaceutical care for the patients. My role is to tailor the therapy to the needs of the individual neonates. I ensure the dose, route, and dosing interval are appropriate according to the patient's weight, age, surface area, and organ functions. With good communication in place with the team, any issues that hinder the achievement of optimal therapy will be assessed and solved. In addition, I provide information on parenteral nutrition for the neonates, therapeutic drug monitoring, identification of adverse drug reactions, polypharmacy, and medication safety. The rounds usually take up most of my mornings. Shortly after the rounds, I will brief the nurses on any changes in the patients' medications. Any drug dilutions and drug administration issues will be discussed with the nurses to avoid possible errors.



In the afternoon, I work closely with the Inpatient Pharmacy to ensure the appropriate medicines are supplied to the wards in a timely manner. Along with the clinical role, I too have specific ward 'house-keeping' responsibilities i.e. ensuring appropriate distribution and storage of medication, keeping the stocks checked and balanced whilst monitoring the drug usage.

Being a mother of four myself, I understand the anxiety and worry of caring for small unwell children. The parents of these neonates need reassurance, guidance, and confidence in using medications for their children. Mothers who are on medications also require counseling on the safety of those medications during breastfeeding. I usually spend the afternoon informing and counseling them on the indications for therapy, the risks and benefits, and possible adverse reactions throughout the hospital stay and upon hospital discharge.

My workday usually ends at around 5.30 p.m., but of course, as a clinical pharmacist in a hospital environment, my clinical role is an all-day responsibility where I have to monitor or attend to any enquiries from either the NICU team or pharmacy staff throughout the day.

I am tremendously humbled and grateful for all the experiences. Working in NICU will always hold a special place in my heart. NICU is a place where God's best works are, where impossible little tiny humans do mighty great things. I see tears and sorrow, but I also get to see unimaginable miracles and profound happiness. I remember the challenging days more often because they are the memories that remind me to cherish the good. I truly believe that our shared hope is for our patients to continue to thrive, grow and live the best life outside the hospital doors.



Yours truly, the invisible white coat of NICU Hospital Putrajaya.  
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# PRESCRIPTION

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