

NEW WORLD, NEW PERSPECTIVE: A Learner in Community Pharmacy

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This Year In
Final year

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March 19, 2024, marked my first venture into a new page of my life story. I recalled being apprehensive about people's expectations of me, given that I am a fourth-year student who should already know most of what I am supposed to know for community pharmacy settings. I was overthinking many possible scenarios that I may face later on while reading notes back-to-back for every mile I drove to my destination. But I am starting to look forward to it because they just warmly welcomed me every morning and eagerly taught me whatever I asked them for or what I did not know. Labelling, serving the patient, housekeeping, learning, restocking, testing blood pressure, and so much more became my routine at the pharmacy.

Truthfully told, my expectations were different before starting my attachment. I thought it would be like a real-life exam—I mean, you get the case and solve it by suggesting the appropriate treatment. It is similar, but it was not always a straightforward case, and the experiences that you hold make it different in terms of how you are handling it. So, for beginners like me, just be like a shadow (because some patients do not feel comfortable if they notice you are eavesdropping on their conversation with the pharmacist) and listen to every case that your pharmacist handles from afar. The staff was also fully equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills when handling patients' ailments or requests, so you will have plenty of chances to hear around and learn.

It was a fun and humbling experience. Be passionate about learning, ask away all those question marks in your mind, and be humble too. New topics are always there for you to explore, so do not shy away from questioning and learning. It is the nature of a learner. The application of knowledge can be different from the theory. A piece of advice from my preceptor: If you are considering becoming a community pharmacist in the future, you must have a passion for serving and treating patients, not just working for money, and leave everything when the time is up. It does not end there.

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