

## An innovative recruitment strategy: “Mini-interviews” as a component of the Pharmacy Resident appointment process

Diana Sandulache<sup>1</sup>, Chloe Bell<sup>1</sup>, Daniel Guidone<sup>2</sup>, Gail Edwards<sup>1</sup>

1. Alfred Health Pharmacy Department, Melbourne; 2. Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia

### Background

The SHPA Residency Program was implemented in 2017 across many Australian health services. The program generated significant interest, with the Alfred Health Pharmacy Department receiving over 100 applicants for the eight available positions; an average of 12 candidates for each position.

Recruitment is a time consuming process, requiring staff who conduct and assist with interviewing to spend considerable time away from their regular duties. Methods that have the potential to improve interview efficiency are therefore of interest and should be trialled.

### Aim

To implement an innovative recruitment method for a Pharmacy Residency program using “mini-interviews”.

### Methods

As a major, multi-site teaching hospital pharmacy department, and based on the experiences of the first intake, the Alfred Health Pharmacy education team anticipated a large number of candidates to apply for the second intake of SHPA Pharmacy Residents.

A recruitment strategy was developed utilising “mini-interviews”, where the interview was separated into three ‘stations’. Candidates responded, in turn, to questions about:

- reflection on practice
- problem solving (example, see Figure 1)
- a clinical scenario

Each interview station was run by a single interviewer to ensure consistency in evaluation, with three interviews occurring simultaneously and candidates rotating through each station.

Each interviewer scored the candidate out of ten. Following the completion of interviews each candidate was given a total score from each component ‘mini-interview’ to determine their final score. The interviewers held a group discussion at the end of the interviews to determine the preferred candidates.

**Scenario:** It’s your first on-call and you receive a call from a nurse on the Cardiology ward at 12:30 AM. The nurse is looking for quinidine tablets for her patient – who has been admitted for resistant VT. The patient is normally on the medication every 6 hours – (6AM, 12PM, 6PM and 12AM) and the nurse has just realised she has run out of the medications.

How do you handle this?

*Prompting questions:*

- What other information do you want to know?
- Would you come in to supply or can we wait until morning?
- How do you determine if a medication is required immediately?
- The patient has been an inpatient for the last 5 days.
  - Does this change anything?
  - How do we prevent this situation from happening in the future?

**Figure 1:** ‘Problem solving’ station example

### Results

For the second intake of SHPA Pharmacy Residents (December 2017), fifty-six pharmacists applied for three positions at Alfred Health. Twenty-seven candidates were interviewed, with each candidate advised in advance that they would be participating in “mini-interviews”.

Each candidate completed three separate ‘mini-interviews’ within a 30 minute period. The order of the stations varied depending on where the candidate started. Interviews for all applicants were completed over the course of two days.

Efficiency was increased three-fold compared to traditional interviews. The schedule ensured ample time for interviewer breaks, minimising fatigue when interviewing large numbers of applicants (Table 1).

**Table 1:** Interview schedule for one interviewer using “mini-interviews”

<b>Applicant #1</b>	<b>Applicant #2</b>	<b>Applicant #3</b>
9:00 AM	9:10 AM	9:20 AM
<b>Applicant #4</b>	<b>Applicant #5</b>	<b>Applicant #6</b>
10:00 AM	10:10 AM	10:20 AM
<b>Applicant #7</b>	<b>Applicant #8</b>	<b>Applicant #9</b>
12:00 PM	12:10 PM	12:20 PM
<b>Applicant #10</b>	<b>Applicant #11</b>	<b>Applicant #12</b>
1:00 PM	1:10 PM	1:20 PM
<b>Applicant #13</b>	<b>Applicant #14</b>	<b>Applicant #15</b>
3:00 PM	3:10 PM	3:20 PM

One barrier to the implementation of “mini-interviews” includes extensive preparation and organisation prior to the day. It is imperative that each interviewer manages time appropriately, as one delay will affect the other candidates in that round. This structure also requires three dedicated interviewers and interview spaces for the duration of the interview period.

A limitation of this method is that each interviewer is only able to assess one component of the interviewees performance.

### Conclusion

“Mini-interviews” demonstrated promise as an effective and efficient recruitment tool for Pharmacy Residency positions. There is potential for this method to be applied to other high volume recruitment scenarios, such as intern selection or future Advanced Pharmacy Residencies, which are anticipated to be highly sought after.