

Real-life story - Narinder Kumar Bhalla

Narinder was always interested in science and medicine. He decided to apply for a pharmacy degree at Demontfort University in 1991 and hasn't looked back. His real passion is medicine safety. He also teaches pharmacy at a local university.

Narinder Kumar Bhalla Consultant pharmacist- medication safety

Employer or university Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

Salary range Unknown

How I got into the role

After graduating, I completed my pre-registration year in the community before managing a community pharmacy for six months. My next step was into hospital pharmacy at the Lister Hospital in Stevenage and then on to Addenbrooke's Hospital in Cambridge. At first, I worked as a resident pharmacist but later became a formulary pharmacist. I've also worked as an adviser for a primary care [1] trust (PCT), including a spell as the head of medicines management.

After three years at the PCT, I returned to hospital practice as lead pharmacist for clinical governance. In 2010 I was appointed to the post of consultant pharmacist for medication safety. I really enjoy it because it requires a high level of clinical and strategic management experience, especially in my area of expertise, medicines safety management.

What I do

For ten years, my work has focused on medicine safety and there has been great success. I set up the trust's medication safety committee which helped to develop an electronic incident reporting database (RMIS). I worked closely with senior medical, nursing and pharmacy colleagues on this project and a number of other issues such as a medicines safety strategy. This has put safety high up the agenda at the trust.

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The best bits and challenges

The best thing about the job is the variety of work. No two days are the same and I really feel that as a pharmacist I make a difference.

Working in pharmacy has enabled me to publish my research widely. I have written articles on a range of clinical topics, including an article on improving anticoagulant safety in the British Journal of Clinical Pharmacy. I have also gained considerable teaching and academic experience and, since 2005, have worked one day a week as teacher practitioner at the School of Pharmacy at University of Hertfordshire.

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[1] https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Primary_care