

"Over time, you get to see the positive impact your advice and care has had on your patients and their loved ones."

A year working as a dispensary assistant gave Aditya a good understanding of the positive impact pharmacists make in local communities, and he's now completing the pre-registration year of a pharmacy degree.

Aditya Aggarwal

Pre-registration pharmacist

Employer or university

Kingshead Chemist, Chingford
Aditya Aggarwal

How I got into the role

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I knew I wanted to work in healthcare, but didn't know in what capacity, so I worked in a pharmacy as a dispensary assistant for a year to understand the role. It was a busy team and I saw how each person works together to help patients.

Currently I'm completing my pharmacy pre-registration year in a community setting with a view to qualifying as a pharmacist. My degree showed me the expanding role of pharmacists and how the integration of pharmacists in community, hospital and industry can help patients. New roles have been developed for pharmacists in GP surgeries and I've come into contact with pharmacists working in consulting and banking areas I'd never thought of before!

What I do

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I'm currently on placement in a pharmacy which is always busy, particularly on Monday mornings! I try to learn as much as possible from my tutor and work as if I'm already a qualified pharmacist.

I arrive at work at 8.30am to get the shop ready and check to see if we've received any urgent faxes from clinics or if there are doctors' notes that need attention. The day is spent completing the weekly orders for patients, preparing prescriptions and providing advice to patients and healthcare professionals. I counsel patients on their medicines and provide support for patients on how to use their medicine devices. I've also shadowed my pharmacist while he carries out medicine reviews and provides advice on minor ailments.

During this pre-registration year, I've worked in 'cross-sector' placements such as in a hospital and a GP practice. The variety has enhanced my learning and helped me see where I would like to fit in. It's definitely given me a better understanding of the NHS structure and how we all work together to help patients.

Contrary to popular belief, pharmacists don't just stick labels on boxes! Most of the time is taken up helping patients maximise use of their medicines through counselling and ensuring the prescription is clinically correct for them and learning if there have been any updates to the national guidance.

The best bits and challenges

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The best bit about the role is knowing you have positively impacted someone's health. Over time, you get to see the positive impact your advice and care has had on your patients and their loved ones.

I have a passion for digital health and have attended lots of conferences to learn more about the NHS. One of the futures I see in community pharmacy is the integration of digital and genomic medicine and learning about this has been fun!

I'd like to be able to spend more time interacting directly with patients about their health and medicines. There's a move towards this already which helps alleviate the pressure

on GPs.

Working in the community can also feel isolated at times compared to working in a bigger team in a hospital.

Life outside work

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I always make sure I have set days to study and set days to relax with friends and family, for example meeting up over dinner.

Career plans and top tips for others

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After my pre-registration year, I'm starting the NHS Graduate Management Training Scheme in policy and strategy. I'll complete four rotations through different areas of the NHS and work towards a postgraduate diploma in health policy.

There's much more to pharmacy than you'd think. The breadth of the degree means you can work in any sector, as long as you're prepared to put effort in to securing a range of placements. An understated skill is networking - speaking to the right person can open all sorts of new opportunities.

You can also follow me on Twitter: [@AdkAggarwal](https://twitter.com/AdkAggarwal) ^[1].

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