Retention of fellows completing a one-year versus two-year industry fellowship program
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Introduction

- In 2016, it is estimated that between 14,000-15,000 PharmDs will enter the workforce, and many will search for non-traditional careers.¹
- One of the non-traditional PharmD career paths of interest is working in the drug development industry. However, these positions can be difficult to obtain immediately post-graduation.
- Pharmaceutical industry fellowships are designed to prepare pharmacy graduates for careers in the pharma-/biopharmaceutical industry. Industry fellowships are typically one or two years in duration, which can often impact applicants’ decision-making process when deciding which fellowship offerings to pursue.
- Because the ultimate goal of an industry fellowship is to prepare the fellow for a full-time industry position, candidates are also likely to be interested in comparing historical retention rates of various fellowship programs.
- The objective of this study is to compare fellow retention rates based upon completion of a one-year versus two-year fellowship.
Methods

● The IPhO Employment Research (ER) Data Set comprises 1329 industry pharmacists educational and employment experiences collected during 2014 from the publicly available LinkedIn profiles of industry pharmacists included in the IPhO database.

● Profiles in the database must include a current or past position in industry and must belong to a 2011 or earlier pharmacy graduate.

● A subset of these data, those who completed industry fellowships (n= 426), was analyzed separately for the purpose of this research.
  o This group was divided into those completing one- or two-year fellowships, n=202 and n=224, respectively.
  o Those whose LinkedIn profiles did not indicate their industry partner were excluded from the analysis.
  o The criteria for retention was met if the fellow's first position following the fellowship was with the sponsor company, a subsidiary of the company, or a company that merged with or was acquired by the sponsor.

● Study data was de-identified prior to analysis and reporting.
Figure 1. Employment Research – Fellowship Data Set

IPhO Employment Research Data Set
Industry Pharmacists (n= 1329)

Industry Pharmacists with Fellowship Experience (n= 426)
- Excluded (n= 57)
  - Retained (n= 109)
  - Not Retained (n= 62)

Industry Pharmacists without Fellowship Experience (n= 903)
- 1-year Fellowship (n= 171)
- 2-year Fellowship (n= 198)
  - Retained (n= 131)
  - Not Retained (n= 67)
Results

- Sixty-four percent (n=109) of those completing a one-year fellowship were retained by their sponsor company, while 36% (n=62) were not (Figure 2).
- Of those completing two-year fellowships, 66% (n=131) were retained by their sponsor company, while 34% (n=67) were not (Figure 2).
- The overall combined retention of 1 and 2-year Fellowship Programs from the Employment Research Data Set was 65% (Figure 3).

Figure 2. Retention of 1 and 2-year Fellowships

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<tr>
<th>Retention of 1 and 2-year Fellowship Programs</th>
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<td>1-Year Fellowships</td>
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<td>2-Year Fellowships</td>
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Figure 3. Overall Retention of Fellowship Programs

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<th>Overall Retention of All Programs</th>
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<tr>
<td>Not Retained</td>
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Discussion

- Fellowship sponsors and partner institutions utilize several key criteria to design individual fellowship program duration.
- Most notably, these include matching the program length with the amount of training needed to prepare the fellow for a full-time position within that functional area.
- Overall retention rates following program completion were very similar for one-year fellowships and two-year fellowships.
- Roughly two-thirds of all fellows during the last 30 years were retained by their sponsor company, regardless of program duration.
- In a 2008 study on Fellowship hiring rates, 52% of Fellows accepted positions at host companies.\(^2\)
- Other factors may impact retention rates and should be further evaluated.
  - These include sponsor company track record, institutional partner track record, functional department of focus, and programs with or without an institutional partner.
- An area of future research interest is the difference between the rate of offers extended for one- and two-year fellowships, as this study only evaluated those who accepted offers.
- This information may have value to fellowship candidates who are evaluating specific programs from which to apply. Additionally, it is incumbent on fellowship stakeholders to continue to monitor their programs to ensure that they are meeting their organization's human resource needs.

Limitations

- The data used in this analysis was split approximately 50% between 1- and 2-year Fellowships, however Fellowship programs are trending toward 2-year programs. In 2014-2015, 83% of industry fellowship programs were 2-years in length.\(^3\)
- In this study, only rates of job acceptances were analyzed, which may provide a skewed view of company retention since rate of job offers extended is unknown.

Conclusion

- Post-doctoral PharmD Fellowships continue to provide pharmacists with a strong foundation for starting a successful career in the pharmaceutical industry. Sponsor companies find strong value in the Fellowship training, given that over 60% of Fellows from either 1 or 2-year programs were retained.
- Additional research related to the initial employment post-fellowship of the 40% in this study, who are not retained would be valuable to fellows and employer stakeholders.
- This research was not able to show whether those participating in 1 or 2-year fellowship programs had an impact on employer retention.
- Quantitative and qualitative research with both employer and fellow audiences may be required in order to identify correlations to the outcome of employment retention.
References: