

Supporting pharmacist's assistants in the workplace – focussing on Jack Mosehla

Lorraine Osman

At the recent PSSA Conference, one of the sessions discussed the type of support that different members of staff need in order to work to their full potential. Who better to ask about the support that a pharmacist's assistant needs than a pharmacist's assistant? The PSSA invited Jack Mosehla to talk about the support that he gets from pharmacists at work.

Jack, a pharmacist's assistant post basic, shared his journey through the world of pharmacy, starting as a medical representative, working as an auxiliary service officer in a public sector hospital, while beginning his training as a pharmacist's assistant, through the medical supplies depot, and finally ending up at the city of Tshwane.



Jack Mosehla

Pharmacists love working with a well presented, educated and knowledgeable Pharmacist's Assistant Post Basic (PAPB) but somehow, they sometimes forget the vital role they play in creating these amazing PAPBs. Some even feel threatened by them, although their scopes of practice are different and teamwork between a pharmacist and a PAPB can produce excellent results.

The most supportive pharmacists that Jack has encountered during his career have given similar support in important areas, such as:

- Orientation,
- Technical support,
- Organisational support,
- Communication skills,

- Attitude, and
- Personal development.

In the public sector, training is ongoing and depends on the needs of the facility. Working under direct supervision in a hospital, Jack found that teamwork was of the utmost importance. Because the pharmacists worked closely with the PAPBs, it was easy to support them as the need arose. Training in the hospital focused on both team work and on operational needs, such as conflict management, time management, customer services and stock control.

Working in distribution, Jack worked closely with the warehouse manager, who was a pharmacist. He now had one on one interaction and support from the manager. About 20 general assistants reported to Jack. Working together with the warehouse manager, they managed the receipt of stock, distribution to different stores within the warehouse, the dispatch to clinics, hospitals and emergency management services, and monitoring of storage conditions, such as temperatures and cold chain.

Different knowledge and skills were needed in this environment, so training focussed on technical, team work and organisational aspects, including supply chain, cold chain and medicine supply management.

He also had some experience in community pharmacy, where support and training were heavily dependent on the attitude and willingness of the pharmacist on duty. Knowledge transfer took place daily, with an emphasis on people skills, over the counter products, side effect and medication interactions.

Working under indirect supervision in a primary healthcare clinic and running a dispensary brought Jack to a new level of responsibility. Indirect supervision requires pharmacist visits to the site at least once a month. Jack is fortunate in that his supervising pharmacist is able to visit and assist him more often than that.

A PBPA can only dispense according to the Standard Treatment Guideline, the Essential Medicines List and Standard Operating Procedures. Only patient-ready packs of medication are supplied

Continuing training focused on attitude, taking responsibility and accountability, with technical, organisational, communication and personal development, including rational medicine use, medicine supply management, SOPs, ISO2008:9001 and presentation skills.

“Working with patients and making a difference is one of the most rewarding feelings you can experience,” says Jack Mosehla.



- The orientation, technical and organisational support, communication skills, attitude and personal development that I've had throughout my journey made me the PAPB I am today
- PHARMACY as a profession is just as much at the heart of all PAPBs as it is with any pharmacist
- Our knowledge is dependent on the pharmacist who works with us

BOTTOMLINE: Amazing PAPBs = Products of amazing pharmacists who took the time to support and invest time in a PAPB