

2024 Health Manpower Survey

Summary of the Characteristics of Pharmacists Enumerated

I. Registered Pharmacists Covered

1.1 The pharmacists covered in the 2024 Health Manpower Survey on Pharmacists (HMS-PHARM) were pharmacists registered with the Pharmacy and Poisons Board of Hong Kong under the Pharmacy and Poisons Ordinance (Chapter 138) as at the survey reference date of 30 June 2024.

1.2 The number of pharmacists covered was 3 332.

II. Response Rate

2.1 Of the 3 332 pharmacists covered, 1 371 responded to the survey, including 488 (35.6%) who submitted their responses through online platform and 883 (64.4%) who submitted by post, giving an overall response rate of 41.1%.

III. Activity Status

3.1 The responding pharmacists were classified as either “economically active”¹ or “economically inactive”¹ based on their status as at the survey reference date of 30 June 2024.

3.2 Economically active (“active”) pharmacists included:

- (a) “employed” pharmacists - pharmacists practising in the pharmacy profession in Hong Kong as at the survey reference date; and
- (b) “unemployed” pharmacists - pharmacists who (i) were not practising in the local pharmacy profession as at the survey reference date; (ii) had been available for work during the seven days before the survey reference date²; AND (iii) had sought work in the local pharmacy profession during the 30 days before the survey reference date³.

3.3 Economically inactive (“inactive”) pharmacists referred to the responding pharmacists who were not practising in the pharmacy profession in Hong Kong as at the survey reference date, excluding those who were on leave and who were “economically active” but “unemployed”.

3.4 Among the 1 371 responding pharmacists, 1 109 (80.9%) were active and 262 (19.1%) were inactive as at the survey reference date of 30 June 2024 (**Chart A**).

3.5 Of the 1 109 active pharmacists enumerated, 1 086 (97.9%) were practising in the local pharmacy profession and 22 (2.0%) were seeking jobs in the local pharmacy profession (**Chart A**).

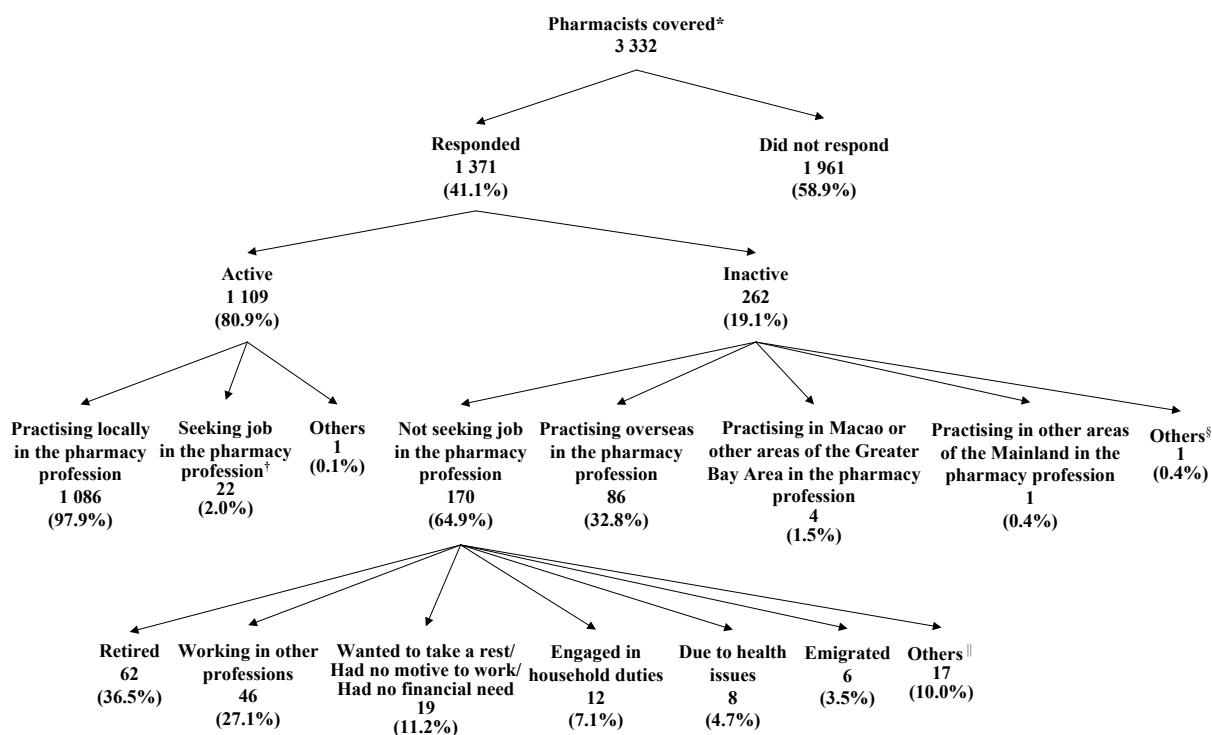
1 In the survey, the criteria used in defining economically active/inactive followed those recommended by the International Labour Organization, which are also being used by the Census and Statistics Department in Hong Kong.

2 The respondent would be classified as “unemployed” if he/she had sought work in the local pharmacy profession but had not been available for work because of temporary sickness.

3 The respondent would be classified as “unemployed” if he/she fulfilled conditions (i) and (ii) but had not sought work during the 30 days before enumeration because he/she believed that work was not available; had made arrangements to take up a new job; was starting business on a subsequent date; or was expecting to return to the original job in the local pharmacy profession.

3.6 Of the 262 inactive pharmacists enumerated, 170 (64.9%) reported not seeking jobs in the local pharmacy profession during the 30 days before the survey reference date, 86 (32.8%) reported practising overseas, four (1.5%) reported practising in Macao or other areas of the Greater Bay Area and one (0.4%) reported practising in other areas of the Mainland. The reasons for not seeking jobs in the local pharmacy profession included: 62 (36.5%) had retired, 46 (27.1%) were working in other professions, 19 (11.2%) wanted to take a rest/had no motive to work/had no financial need, etc. (Chart A).

Chart A : Breakdown of Pharmacists Covered and Activity Status of Pharmacists Enumerated



Notes: * Figure refers to the number of pharmacists who had registered with the Pharmacy and Poisons Board of Hong Kong under the Pharmacy and Poisons Ordinance (Chapter 138) as at the survey reference date of 30 June 2024.

† Figure refers to the number of responding pharmacists who (a) were not practising in the pharmacy profession in Hong Kong as at the survey reference date; (b) had been available for work in the local pharmacy profession during the seven days before the survey reference date; AND (c) had sought work in the local pharmacy profession during the 30 days before the survey reference date.

§ Figure refers to the number of responding pharmacists who were not available for work in the local pharmacy profession during the seven days before the survey reference date.

|| Figure refers to the number of responding pharmacists who reported not seeking work in the local pharmacy profession during the 30 days before the survey reference date due to other reasons such as undertaking study, starting business in the pharmacy profession, etc.

Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

IV. Characteristics of Active Local Pharmacists Enumerated

4.1 The survey results presented in this section were based on the information provided by 1 086 responding pharmacists who were practising in the local pharmacy profession as at the survey reference date of 30 June 2024 (hereafter referred to as “active local pharmacist”).

4.2 Of the 1 086 active local pharmacists enumerated, there were 505 (46.5%) male and 566 (52.1%) female. The remaining 15 (1.4%) respondents did not indicate their gender. Among the 1 071 respondents who indicated their gender, the overall sex ratio (males per 100 females) was 89. The median age of the 1 072 active local pharmacists enumerated who reported their age was 42.0 years. Among 1 060 responding pharmacists with known age and gender, the median age of females and males were 41.0 years and 43.0 years respectively.

4.3 The respondents were requested to indicate the characteristics of their main jobs⁴. Among the 1 086 active local pharmacists enumerated, 610 (56.2%) reported that their main jobs were in the private sector, 328 (30.2%) in the Hospital Authority, 103 (9.5%) in the Government and 42 (3.9%) in the academic and subvented sectors.

4.4 Among the 1 069 active local pharmacists enumerated who indicate their ages and the sectors of their main jobs, the median age for respondents who were working in the private sector was 47.0 years, whereas the median ages for those working in the Government, the academic and subvented sectors and the Hospital Authority were 46.0 years, 38.0 years and 34.0 years respectively.

4.5 Respondents were asked to indicate the time spent on different areas of work. The main area of work is defined as the area in which they spent most of their working time. Of the 1 086 active local pharmacists enumerated, 760 (70.0%) worked in service in pharmacy⁵, 129 (11.9%) in administration/management⁶ and 65 (6.0%) reported manufacturing/marketing/sales⁷ as their main area of work. Nine (0.8%) did not indicate their area of work.

4.6 Among the 1 076 active local pharmacists enumerated who reported their weekly working hours, the median number of hours of work per week (excluding meal breaks) was 42.5 hours. Among the 1 086 active local pharmacists enumerated, 102 (9.4%) were required to undertake on-call duty, with a median 8.0 hours of on-call duty per week (excluding normal duty).

4.7 Among the 1 086 active local pharmacists enumerated, 410 (37.8%) held Bachelor’s Degree issued by overseas institutions, 378 (34.8%) held Bachelor’s Degree issued by institutions in Hong Kong and 184 (16.9%) held Master’s Degree issued by overseas institutions as their earliest basic qualification.

4.8 Of the 1 086 active local pharmacists enumerated, 713 (65.7%) had obtained additional training after obtaining their earliest basic qualification, 368 (33.9%) did not obtain any additional training and five (0.5%) did not respond. Of the 713 respondents who reported having obtained additional training, 489 (68.6%) held Master’s Degree, 73 (10.2%) held Certificate and 34 (4.8%) held Graduate Diploma as the highest qualification through the additional training, 42 (5.9%) had not yet completed the additional training.

4 Main jobs referred to the jobs in which the pharmacists had spent most of their working time.

5 Service in pharmacy referred to work which had direct contact with patients in dispensing and patient counselling.

6 Administration/Management referred to work which was out of scope of pharmacy such as supervising staff, accounting, budget control, procurement of drugs, etc.

7 Manufacturing/Marketing/Sales referred to work involving in the pharmaceutical company (wholesaler) or pharmaceutical manufacturer such as manufacturing, marketing and sales.

4.9 Of the 713 respondents who had obtained additional training after obtaining their earliest basic qualification, 517 (72.5%) had obtained additional training in one field only, which included training in clinical pharmacy (63.6%), pharmacy (11.8%), Chinese medicine (8.7%), health administration (3.1%) and pharmaceutical science (1.7%).

4.10 Of the 713 respondents who had obtained additional training, 190 (26.6%) had obtained more than one field of additional training. The most commonly reported fields included: clinical pharmacy which was reported by 149 (78.4%) of the respondents, pharmacy which was reported by 78 (41.1%) of the respondents and Chinese medicine which was reported by 70 (36.8%).

4.11 Among 1 086 active local pharmacists enumerated, 945 (87.0%) reported that they had participated in continuing education training during the 12-month period preceding the survey reference date, 136 (12.5%) reported no participation in any continuing education training, and five (0.5%) did not report whether they had participated in continuing education training. Among the 945 respondents who had participated in continuing education training, the distribution of continuing education training hours attained in the past 12 months was as follows: 1 to 10 hours (28.6%), 11 to 20 hours (24.7%), 21 to 30 hours (20.1%), 31 to 40 hours (7.8%) and more than 40 hours (18.8%).

V. Trend Observation

5.1 The number of pharmacists covered in HMS-PHARM increased from 409 in 1982 to 3 332 in 2024 (**Chart B**).

5.2 Selected characteristics of active local pharmacists collected during the survey years between 1982 and 2024 were tabulated for reference (**Table A**).

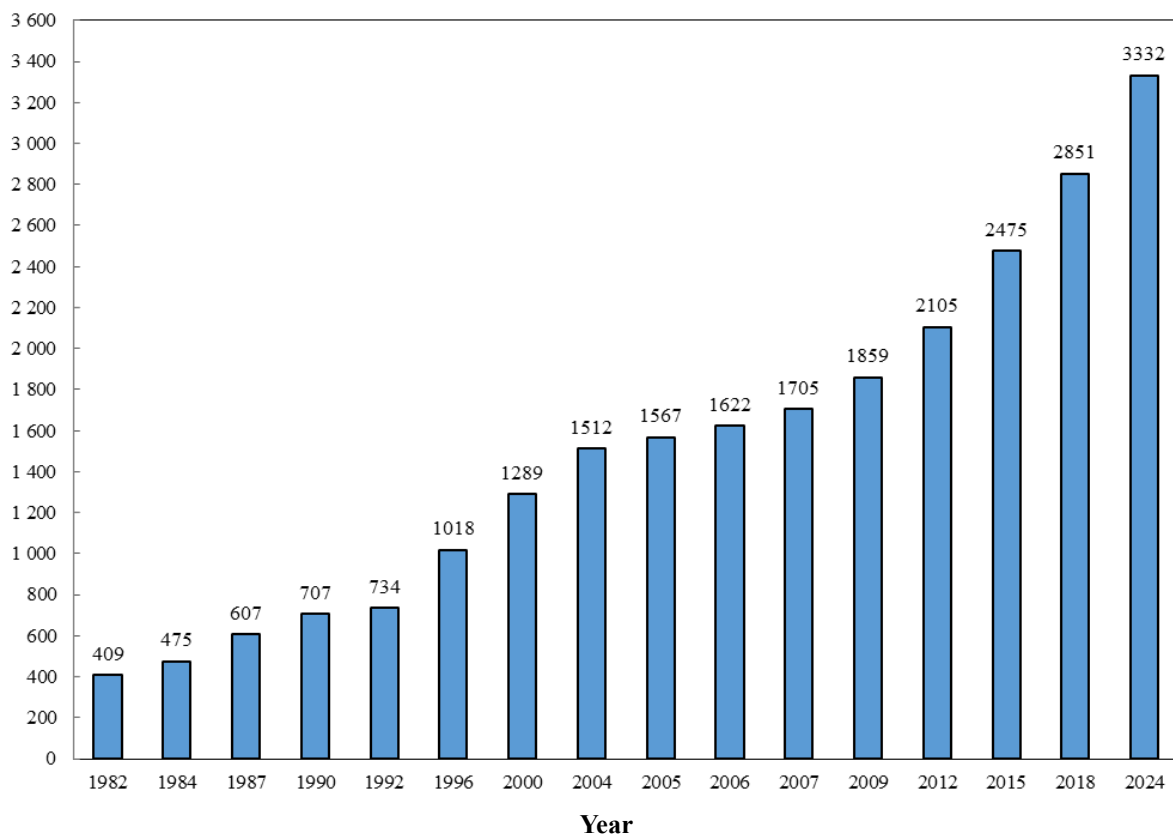
5.3 Data from the survey results since 1982 showed that the private sector is the largest employer. The number of responding pharmacists working in the Hospital Authority (HA) was recorded from 1992. Since then, the HA has been the second-largest employer. During the period 2004 to 2024, the proportion of responding pharmacists working in the HA remained in the range of 27.3% to 31.9%. During the same period, the proportion of responding pharmacists working in the private sector showed a trend of decrease, from 65.7% in 2004 to 56.2% in 2024; while the proportion working in the Government showed an increase, from 4.6% in 2004 to 9.5% in 2024. The proportion working in the academic and subvented sector also showed an increase, from 1.5% in 2004 to 3.9% in 2024 (**Table A**).

5.4 The sex ratio (males per 100 females) showed a general trend of decrease since the survey in 1984, from 199 in 1984, to 95 in 2004 and 89 in 2024 (**Table A**).

5.5 Data on median age was recorded from the 2000 survey onwards. The median age of the respondents has shown a gradual increase from 36.0 years in 2000 to 41.0 years in 2012; during the period 2015 to 2024, was in the range between 39.0 years to 42.0 years (**Table A**).

Chart B : Number of Pharmacists Covered in Health Manpower Survey by Survey Year (1982 - 2024)

Number



Note : Figures of 2000 and before refer to the number of pharmacists registered with the Pharmacy and Poisons Board of Hong Kong as at 1 July of the respective years, whereas the figures of 2004 to 2007, 2009, 2012, 2015 and 2018 refer to that as at 31 August of the respective years. Figure of 2024 refers to the number of pharmacists registered with the Pharmacy and Poisons Board of Hong Kong as at 30 June 2024.

Table A : Selected Characteristics of Active Local Pharmacists Enumerated in Health Manpower Survey by Survey Year (1982 - 2024)

Characteristics	Survey Year							
	1982	1984	1987	1990	1992	1996	2000	2004
A. Registered Pharmacists Covered*	409	475	607	707	734	1 018	1 289	1 512
B. Active Local Pharmacists								
Number enumerated	282	317	366	391	439	610	758	613
Sex								
Male	-	211	234	237	259	351	413	299
Female	-	106	132	154	180	259	345	314
Unknown	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
Sex Ratio (males per 100 females)	189	199	177	154	144	136	120	95
Mean Age	36.1	36.4	37.0	38.6	37.5	37.1	37.3	38.6
Median Age	-	-	-	-	-	-	36.0	36.0
Sector of Work †								
Government	73 (25.9%)	78 (24.6%)	88 (24.0%)	81 (20.7%)	30 (6.8%)	36 (5.9%)	46 (6.1%)	28 (4.6%)
Hospital Authority	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	83 (18.9%)	179 (29.3%)	183 (24.1%)	172 (28.1%)
Private	190 (67.4%)	215 (67.8%)	257 (70.2%)	285 (72.9%)	321 (73.1%)	384 (63.0%)	518 (68.3%)	403 (65.7%)
Others ‡	19 (6.7%)	24 (7.6%)	21 (5.8%)	25 (6.4%)	5 (1.1%)	11 (1.8%)	11 (1.5%)	9 (1.5%)
Unknown	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	1 (0.2%)

Notes : * Figures of 2000 and before refer to the number of pharmacists registered with the Pharmacy and Poisons Board of Hong Kong as at 1 July of the respective years, whereas the figures of 2004 to 2007, 2009, 2012, 2015 and 2018 refer to that as at 31 August of the respective years. Figures of 2024 refers to the number of pharmacists registered with the Pharmacy and Poisons Board of Hong Kong as at 30 June 2024.

† In 2004 to 2007, 2009, 2012, 2015, 2018 and 2024 HMS-PHARM, the sector refers to the sector of main job.

‡ Included academic and subvented sectors. Military was included in the 1987 and 1996 HMS-PHARM.

There may be slight discrepancy between the sum of individual items and the total due to rounding.

N.A. Not applicable

‘-’ Not available

Table A (cont.): Selected Characteristics of Active Local Pharmacists Enumerated in Health Manpower Survey by Survey Year (1982 - 2024)

Characteristics	Survey Year							
	2005	2006	2007	2009	2012	2015	2018	2024
A. Registered Pharmacists Covered*	1 567	1 622	1 705	1 859	2 105	2 475	2 851	3 332
B. Active Local Pharmacists								
Number enumerated	809	798	831	949	823	817	1 032	1 086
Sex								
Male	387	388	399	446	386	375	485	505
Female	421	408	432	496	431	437	543	566
Unknown	1	2	N.A.	7	6	5	4	15
Sex Ratio (males per 100 females)	92	95	92	90	90	86	89	89
Mean Age	38.6	38.8	39.2	40.3	42.0	42.0	41.6	43.9
Median Age	37.0	37.0	38.0	39.0	41.0	40.0	39.0	42.0
Sector of Work †								
Government	34 (4.2%)	34 (4.3%)	35 (4.2%)	55 (5.8%)	70 (8.5%)	70 (8.6%)	99 (9.6%)	103 (9.5%)
Hospital Authority	223 (27.6%)	228 (28.6%)	232 (27.9%)	259 (27.3%)	230 (27.9%)	261 (31.9%)	316 (30.6%)	328 (30.2%)
Private	536 (66.3%)	526 (65.9%)	551 (66.3%)	616 (64.9%)	503 (61.1%)	457 (55.9%)	580 (56.2%)	610 (56.2%)
Others ‡	12 (1.4%)	7 (0.9%)	13 (1.6%)	16 (1.7%)	20 (2.4%)	29 (3.5%)	37 (3.6%)	42 (3.9%)
Unknown	4 (0.5%)	3 (0.4%)	N.A.	3 (0.3%)	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	3 (0.3%)

Notes : * Figures of 2000 and before refer to the number of pharmacists registered with the Pharmacy and Poisons Board of Hong Kong as at 1 July of the respective years, whereas the figures of 2004 to 2007, 2009, 2012, 2015 and 2018 refer to that as at 31 August of the respective years. Figures of 2024 refers to the number of pharmacists registered with the Pharmacy and Poisons Board of Hong Kong as at 30 June 2024.

† In 2004 to 2007, 2009, 2012, 2015, 2018 and 2024 HMS-PHARM, the sector refers to the sector of main job.

‡ Included academic and subvented sectors. Military was included in the 1987 and 1996 HMS-PHARM.

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