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## PERCEPTION OF PHARMACY STUDENTS AT PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES IN MALAYSIA TOWARDS THE ROLES OF PHARMACISTS IN PHARMACEUTICAL INDUSTRY

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### ABSTRACT

Opportune careers in the pharmaceutical industries have given pharmacists vital responsibilities in making remarkable contributions to the development and delivery of medications to patients worldwide. This cross-sectional study determined the perception of undergraduate students towards the roles of industrial pharmacists. Post local ethics approval and consent, developed self-administered questionnaire was reviewed by a group of pharmacist and pilot tested before being distributed randomly among Bachelor of Pharmacy students (year one until four) in four private universities in Malaysia (n = 1040), from August until September 2010. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used for data analysis whereby *p* value < 0.05 was considered as statistically significant. The response rate was 56.1% (n = 583). The overall mean (SD) age of students was 21.0 years old ( $\pm 1.8$ ), majority were females (78.9%), Chinese (56.6%), single (99.7%) and enrolled into pharmacy degree programme via matriculation qualification (32.1%). The top tenth perceived involvement roles and activities of industrial pharmacists with significant differences\* due to different year of study (where applicable) were medical and drug information, drug safety, quality assurance and quality control, drug-interaction studies\*, drug regulatory affairs, drug / device discovery, formulation research and development, medical and scientific affairs, clinical research trials and development, medical communications and education\*, and manufacturing / production\*. Their total perception level was 83.4% with average perception level of 4.2. Overall, students agreed that pharmacists engage superior roles as part of integral members in pharmaceutical industries and not only entailed laboratory-based researches.

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