

# FACE2FACE

## Compliance Aid Pharmacist

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Gillian Murray

### Question:

What is your job title?

### Answer:

The best title for my job description would probably be a Compliance Aid Pharmacist.

### What are your main responsibilities/duties?

On a daily basis I operate the Robotik Technology 'e-Robotik 405' robot to carry out the automated dispensing of repeat prescriptions, producing medication pouches for weekly and daily dispensing patients. I also operate the 'e-Vision Pack Inspector' which uses image capturing software to photograph every individual pouch, allowing complete traceability, a reduction in error margins and improved process efficiency. I am preparing a product that is simple for the patient to use yet provides them with a high standard of patient care and promotes medication adherence. I also have to deal with any medication interventions for our patients and ensure their medication pouches are up-to-date with any treatment changes.

### To whom do you report and where does the post fit in the management structure?

I report to our superintendent pharmacist.

### How was the post funded and is this on a non-recurring or recurring basis?

The post is funded by means of annual salary on a recurring basis.

### When was the post first established?

The post was first established around three years ago when the 'e-Robotik 405' robot was first purchased and introduced into the pharmacy. To ensure a quality service is provided, a post was introduced for a pharmacist to be dedicated to the running of the whole process, from setting up new patients to completing the final check on the prescriptions.

### Are you the first post holder?

I am the second post holder and have been in the post for one year. I have found the post well suited to my systematic way of working and I feel proud to be involved in providing this novel product for multiple dispensing within community pharmacy.

### What were the main drivers for the establishment of the post and how did it come about?

Within the pharmacy there was an increasing number of weekly and daily dispensing patients, which required the time-consuming assembling of trays and skillets. This put staff under pressure which, in turn, increased the risk of errors and potential harm to patients. After exploring the alternatives available, the robot was purchased and the post then came about. Since installing the robot, it has freed up the time for pharmacists to engage in more pharmacy services and to focus more on patient care. There has also been a noticeable decrease in errors compared to the manual dispensing of trays and skillets, thus a higher safety level is now in place.

### What have been the main difficulties in establishing/developing the post to its current level?

One of the main difficulties initially was changing patients over to the new system and ensuring that they understood how to use the product. We find that patients are really happy with the medication pouches and a number of carers have commented that they prefer the system to previous methods. With the improved

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efficiency of the dispensing process, it has lead to a considerable increase in the number of weekly and daily dispensing patients we are able to facilitate and, consequently, the post has developed to its current level. We now currently dispense for around 400 patients per month, a figure which would just not be possible without automated dispensing.

**What have been the main achievements/successes of the post?**

Ballee Pharmacy was one of the first pharmacies in Northern Ireland to use a robot for automated dispensing, and the first in UK with the e-Vision Pack Inspector. It has led to the introduction of more robots across Northern Ireland. The ultimate aim is to help patients take and understand their medications better and, by offering this product to them, the feedback has been extremely positive. Being able to help a patient/relative/carer in the administration and adherence of medication, and hearing what a difference it creates, really makes the post worthwhile.

**What are the main challenges/priorities for future development within the post which you currently face?**

The big challenge of working with technology is the occurrence of it breaking down. However, we now have a technology service advisor based in Northern Ireland who can provide prompt help and repairs if and when it required. A key priority for future advancement is the integration of automated dispensing into domiciliary care, and utilising the product to enhance patient care.

**What are the key competencies required to do the post and what options are available for training?**

Organisational skills are very important and being able to work systematically is key in order to successfully carry out the production of the pouches, especially with a high volume of patients. Initial training is available by Robotik Technologies during the setup of the equipment and software, but support can be promptly obtained through our technology service advisor. The software may seem daunting at first, but it isn't complicated and is quite easy to become familiar with.

**How does the post fit with general career development opportunities within the profession?**

Within pharmacy these days there seems to be an increasing number of weekly and daily dispense patients, and automated dispensing

allows for a more manageable process. It is less time consuming, has a reduction in the number of errors compared to manual dispensing, and allows complete traceability of all the pouches produced. It's the future of pharmacy!

**How do you think the post might be developed in the future?**

As previously mentioned, integrating automated dispensing into domiciliary care is something we want to explore in the future. Also, the further development of the 'hub and spoke' model would allow the robotised dispensing of repeat prescriptions at dispensing hubs for other pharmacies. This is an area that would greatly expand the availability of this service to patients across the country.

**What messages would you give to others who might be establishing/developing a similar post?**

I appreciate that for many pharmacies it is not feasible to bring in automated dispensing, but it is a process that works for us. With the increasing dispensing of weekly and daily prescriptions within community pharmacy, this is a solution that can allow better time management, a greater efficiency in work flow, and a safer product produced for optimum patient care.

**Declaration of interests**

- None



*The robot has freed up pharmacist dispensing time*