



Who am I as a Pharmacist in 2024?

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Geziena E Kruger-Swanepoel obtained her BPharm degree in 2007 from the North-West University. In June 2022, she graduated cum laude from the North-West University, Potchefstroom Campus and obtained her Master's degree in Pharmacy Practice. She is currently employed as a Responsible Pharmacist at Jan Kempdorp CHC.



"Being a pharmacist is not just a job to me, it is who I am, it defines me, I cannot stop being a pharmacist. There is no greater feeling to experience or to know that you helped make someone feel better today, empowering them with knowledge about medication."

The evolving role of pharmacist in the current landscape, focusing on personal experiences, challenges, and growth opportunities

In Geziena's experience working in a rural Community Healthcare Centre in the Northern Cape Province, the pharmacist and the pharmacy is the central point where all the prescribers (professional nurses and doctors) come to, for medicine information, medicine supply, information on current treatment guidelines, changes in formulary, and adverse drug reactions reporting.

The pharmacy is also the final stop for most patients entering the facility, and therefore it is the responsibility of the pharmacists to ensure that when dispensing medication, prescriptions are checked for interactions, prescribers adhere to appropriate guidelines and lastly to provide the best pharmaceutical care to the patient. If discrepancies are detected, then it is also the pharmacist's responsibility to engage with the prescriber.

Geziena believes that there is an opportunity for pharmacists to settle into a different, more prominent, and active role as part of the multi-

disciplinary team looking after a patient. Pharmacists will, therefore, be placed into a unique role where they can teach, learn, and promote adherence to treatment guidelines, to minimise prescribing errors, antimicrobial resistance and enhance overall patient care. Pharmacists are an integral part of the multidisciplinary team and the positive contribution in sharing their exceptional medication knowledge will be well received.

Throughout her career as a pharmacist in the Northern Cape Department of Health, Geziena has practiced in a Rural Primary Healthcare setting, where she has learned to adapt to very limited resources and to improvise daily by thinking "outside of the box", to ensure quality healthcare is provided to her patients. Her passion is antiretroviral medicines (ARVs), teaching the prescribers the guidelines and the importance of monitoring for ARV resistance.

During the completion of her master's degree in pharmacy practice, which she embarked on part time, she did experience some difficulty in balancing work, home and her studies. However, entering the field of research broadened her vision and helped her to see that there are vast possibilities and opportunities to use her skills in her current role as responsible pharmacist. She has now further been inspired to pursue a possible career in research and pharmacovigilance.