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Global perceptions for the profession of medical laboratory sciences

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Biomedical Laboratory Technologists or Scientists play a fundamental role in diagnosis and disease management of patients. South Africa has the largest economy in Africa but is one of the most inequitable societies in the world, illustrated by the disparity between private and public sector healthcare funding. Eighty-four percent of South Africans cannot afford to contribute to private health care insurance and are thus reliant on the public health care systems which utilize the laboratory services provided by the National Health Laboratory Services (NHLS). The NHLS provides South Africans access to pathology services in both the private and state funded medical laboratories. The service provides a comprehensive range of laboratory tests across all medical laboratory science disciplines. A mere 16% of the South African population belong to private medical aids which gives them greater benefits for utilization of private pathology laboratory services after consultation with a clinician. These private pathology laboratories provide additional comprehensive specialized diagnostic analyses for patient treatment. This was a qualitative study making use of semi-structured open ended questions. Four hundred eighty surveys were sent out using an online program called Survey Monkey. There was a response rate of 32.4%.

Majority of the respondents were Medical Technologist employed in private pathology laboratories. Approximately 98.59% of respondents were registered with the Health Professions Council of South Africa; however, only 54.23% were active members of the Society of Medical Laboratory Technologist of South Africa. The majority of respondents were female with job satisfaction of approximately 71.90%. More than 30% of the respondents were employed for more than 15 years.

Biography

Moonira Mullah is an HPCSA board registered CPD compliant cytology-technologist with a Baccalaureus Technologiae, [Btech degree], in Biomedical Technology from the University of Johannesburg. She has just submitted a thesis for a Masters [MTECH] in Biomedical Technology to the Cape Peninsula University of Technology. Moonira Mullah is a cytology lecturer at the University of Johannesburg for second and third year undergraduate students since 2000. She has also lectured post graduate Laboratory Management at the University of Johannesburg and is currently the moderator of this subject. Moonira Mullah has assisted with cytology lectures for Cape Peninsula University of Technology's undergraduate and post graduate Students in Johannesburg. She is currently the board examiner for Cytology Technicians nationally. She has assisted the SMLTSA/HPCSA with laboratory audits for cytology labs as well as private medical technology laboratories. Moonira Mullah has worked as an independent cytology practitioner [private practice] since 1997 screening both gynaecological and non-gynaecological in South Africa and Botswana. She has a special interest in HPV and Cervical Cancer and has travelled to both national and international conferences to present her research. The laboratory has recently partnered with Gift of the Givers Foundation to provide affordable laboratory services to all sectors of the community.

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