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SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE

Everyone whose name is on the Register of Pharmaceutical Chemists and who returned their census form towards the end of last year has contributed to ensuring that the Society has a mass of data with which it can help plan the needs of the pharmacy workforce.

The headline results of the survey can be found on page 314, and they make for interesting reading — whether you are one of the 14 per cent of pharmacists who have more than one job or are one of the 11 per cent of the profession who works more than 49 hours a week.

For example, the pharmacy profession has always been attractive to women, partly because pharmacy is one of the caring professions and partly because it offers flexibility. This is essential for women who wish to take time off or reduce their hours while they look after children but who would like to increase their commitment again at a later stage in their career. This attraction is reflected in the figures: more than half of the whole profession is female (52 per cent *vs* 48 per cent). Between the ages of 40 and 49 years, about 55 per cent of the Register are women, but in the lower two age groups women dominate even more. For those between the ages of 30 and 39 years, women account for just over 65 per cent of the Register and for those under the age of 29 years, just over 66 per cent.

The fact that women make up most of the profession is not a new finding, but this domination must have an impact on the total number of pharmacy hours available to the workforce when some of these women stop work or reduce their hours for some years. It is a problem facing the medical profession as well. For both professions, leaders and the Government will have to consider the needs of these younger women carefully in order to ensure that maximum use is made of their skills.

Another interesting revelation from the census is that well over a third of the workforce in the community work as locums — twice as many as the number of owners (8,351 *vs* 4,152). There are many unanswered questions about this group. How many of them are in regular work but in different pharmacies depending on the day of the week? How many take whatever job comes along, are happy to work unsocial hours and travel fair distances if the work demands it? And how many are content to work only two or three days a week rather than work as many hours as a full-time employee pharmacist?

Some of these questions will be answered by further analysis of the census results which will be published in *The Journal* later in the year. Others will need further research if the workforce data are to be used effectively for planning purposes.