

Pharmacist Profile

Name: Ereni Tautolo
Job: Pharmacist
Pharmacy: Mangere Pharmacy,
Mangere, Auckland



Background:

My father is Samoan and my mother Cook Islands Māori. I grew up in Mangere, South Auckland. I went to Marcellin College, a Catholic school, and then Epsom Girls in the 7th Form. I was mainly into sciences at school but also loved sports and still play touch rugby. I was not absolutely sure what I wanted to do career-wise, but worked part time in the University Library on evenings and weekends. I have an older brother and sister, each of whom are university tutors.

I attended the University of Auckland; initially completing a foundation course called the Certificate in Health Sciences. During that first year a training pharmacist came along to talk to us about pharmacy. What really appealed to me was that the pay was good, I could help people, it is science related, but different from the standard medical degrees.

What type of pharmacy do you work in and what kind of clients use your pharmacy?

I work in a community pharmacy in the Mangere Town Centre. It has a diverse multi-cultural community including Māori, Pacific Islanders, Pakeha, Middle Easterners and Indians. Because I grew up here, I know a lot of the people and can understand and relate to the experiences and hardships of our clients.

We have a large number of elderly clients who come in regularly to collect their regular prescriptions. Some people find it quite hard to take their medicines, so need help and advice about that. We also have a number of methadone clients whom I've come to know well.

Part of my job involves talking to doctors about what we do and some of the services we offer such as reviewing patients medication, talking to diabetic patients about their medicines. Sometimes we attend doctors meetings so that we can work together to provide the best service and care for our clients.

What do you enjoy most about your job?

I love talking to people and also working as a team. As well as myself, there are two pharmacists here, two technicians and two assistants. We get on really well and it's a great place to work.

The most appealing thing to me about Pharmacy as a career choice, is being able to help people make permanent changes to their lives and following their progress as their health improves.

What is an average day for you?

I get in early and dispense to the methadone patients, before cashing up the tills from the day before.

Then it's on to dispensing prescriptions and checking the ones done by our technician, giving out medicines/prescriptions and advising patients. Quite often patients want to talk to you about other

problems they have and to buy something over the counter (without prescription). When this happens, you have to make sure that you check what medication they are already on so that they don't buy something that may have an adverse reaction to their regular medication.

What is your greatest success in your job so far?

Don't think I've really had one! Probably just that I love my job, I love the community I work in and the wide range of things that happen every day so that its never boring! One of the best things is being able to make a positive difference to the lives of the people in this community.

Why should anyone consider a career as a pharmacist?

There are lots of opportunities within pharmacy - not just in the community, but also within hospitals, industry and research. It's a mobile qualification that you can take anywhere in the world and one day I'd like to work overseas for the experience that I could gain. If you are interested in, and like helping people, it can be a very rewarding career.