

STUDY OF PHARMACY EMPLOYEES WORKING CONDITIONS OF DAKAR REGION.

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Relationship between pharmacists and employees are governed by labor law. However, in Senegal, some employees of pharmacies work mostly in precarious conditions, are poorly paid and without any contract. **Objective:** The objective of our work was to study pharmacy employees working conditions, in Dakar region. **Methodology:** This is a descriptive, cross-sectional study conducted between November 2017 and January 2018, in 50 pharmacies of Dakar, Guédiawaye and Pikine boroughs. We were mainly interested in assistant pharmacists and students. Data were analyzed by using 'Google Questionnaire forms'. **Results:** Students are the most important segment (50%), with an average of 28 years old. They were followed by assistants and doctor in pharmacy (43%) with an average of 30 years old; and rest of employees (7%). There was a male employees predominance of 61% and most of them were not satisfied with their working conditions. Twenty percent (20%) of students underestimate their salary paid without a wage slip. Social coverage rate is low as for students and assistants. **Conclusion:** Employees are relatively young, with an average between 28 and 30 years old, and a male predominance. They are not satisfied with their working conditions. Method of payment is not up to standard and majority of employees have no social security.

KEYWORDS: Employer - contract - salary - employee - assistants - students - work social – pharmacists.

INTRODUCTION

Working conditions are much more important than performance. Indeed, when staff feels satisfied with framework provided by employer, there is an improvement in quality service. Concerning pharmacy profession, it has been for a long first choice of students and graduates majority. It's an institution where they use their skills to serve employers represented by titular of pharmacists.^[1] However, they most often work in precarious conditions, poorly paid at salary level, and without any contract. In addition, we found that pharmacist doesn't stay longer in the same pharmacy; instead giving priority to other sectors where they have a better management.^[2]

Pharmacies are wholly-owned companies, employees are subject to same rules of rights as any other company workers. Relations between pharmacists and their employees are therefore governed by labor law, which includes not only paperwork (employment contract, breach of contract, etc.), but especially settlement of disputes. In Senegal, most pharmacists focus more on seeking profits rather than address employees working conditions. The problem occurrence led us to wonder

about working environment in pharmacy, and why some pharmacy employees, no longer attend pharmacies? The objective of our work is to study working conditions of pharmacy employees in Dakar region. At this level, we focused on students and assistants pharmacists. A questionnaire on existence of an employment contract, salary level, delivery of a pay slip and social security, was administered to them.

I. Study framework

The study was conducted in 50 randomly selected pharmacies in Dakar region, particularly in districts of Dakar, Guédiawaye and Pikine.

Dakar is one of the fourteen administrative regions of Senegal. Located in the peninsula of Cape Verde, it corresponds to the capital territory Dakar and its suburbs. Its area is 550 km² with a population of 3,215,255 inhabitants, an a density of 5846 inhabitants per km². It is bounded to the east by Thies region and its northern parts, West and South by Atlantic Ocean. Also, it is one of the attractions of West Africa coast nearest to tropical America.^[3] Dakar region comprises four departments (Dakar, Guédiawaye, Pikine and Rufisque), and ten districts (Dakar Plateau, Plots Assainies, Grand Dakar,

Almadies, Guédiawaye, Thiaroye Niayes, Pikine Dagoudane, Rufisque and Sangalkam).^[4]

II. MATERIAL AND METHODS

II.1. Material

We used an electronic questionnaire " Google questionnaire forms ". Questions focused on type of cooperation between employers and employees.

II.2. Methods

This is a descriptive cross-sectional study that was conducted between November 2017 and January 2018, with a sample of 50 randomly selected pharmacies in Dakar region.

We were mainly interested in assistants pharmacists and students.

For data collection, we used the electronic questionnaire " Google Questionnaire forms ", incorporating following indicators to assess employees' working conditions such as:

- Existence of a labor contract for employees,
- Salary level,
- Delivery of a pay slip,
- Social security,
- Employee satisfaction.

Data was collected using the electronic questionnaire " Google Questionnaire forms ", were analyzed by " Google Questionnaire forms ", in a form of graphs and tables.

III. RESULTS

Data collection was limited by difficulty in meeting some interlocutors on site, but especially by the fact that we couldn't obtain some pharmacists opinion on the issue. However, we were able to obtain the following information about categories of pharmacy employees, students and assistants pharmacists working conditions.

III.1. Characteristics of pharmacy employees

This is basically students and assistants pharmacists, with a predominance of male employees (61%), against (39%) of female (Fig.1).

1. Distribution of employees by gender

In Senegal, we find that male pharmacist employees, are almost double of those to the opposite sex, with 61% and 39% respectively (Fig. 1).

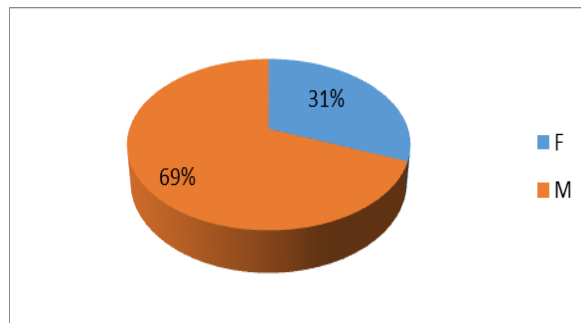


Figure 1: Distribution of employees by gender.

2. Distribution of employees by age

It appears from our study that the age of main collaborators of pharmacists, varies between 23 and 40 years (Fig.2).

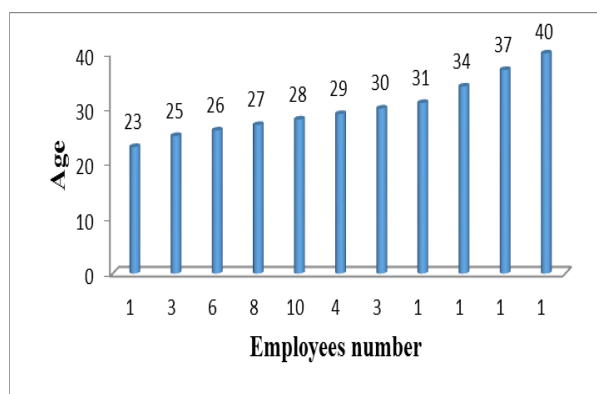


Figure 2: Distribution of employees by age.

3. Distribution of employees by professional category

According to our results, three categories of employees, represented by students (50%), assistants and pharmacists who hold a doctorate in pharmacy (43%) and other employees (7%). Their distribution is shown in Figure 3.

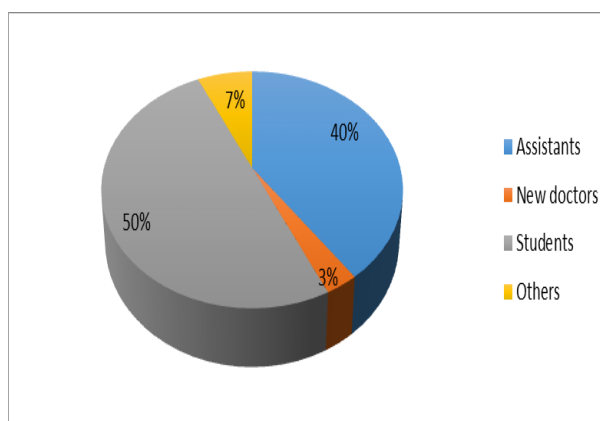


Figure 3: Distribution of employees by professional category.

III.2. Student Working conditions

1. Existence of an employment contract

Our results showed that forty percent (40%) of students were working without a written contract, and there was no evidence that they were regular employees in

pharmacies where they worked. However, ten percent (10%) had a contract including four percent (4%) of fixed-term contracts, two percent (2%) of permanent contracts, two percent (2%) of the test of agreement, and two percent (2%) of providers contract (Figure 4).

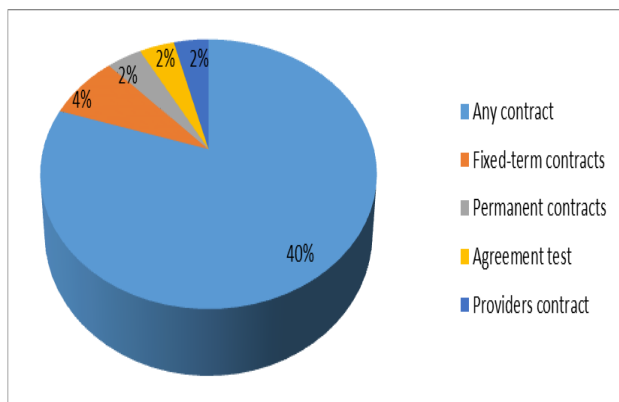


Figure 4: Distribution of employment contracts depending upon availability.

2. Content of employment contract

The employment contract should refer to texts governing but also specify some elements, such as pay and childcare. This is not the case in our results, where salary is variously appreciated. Also, employees participate in child care without activity being included in a contract.

2.1. Staff remuneration

Without a pharmacy collective agreement, twenty percent (20%) of students consider their salary insufficient, between 100,000 and 150,000 CFA francs (fig.5).

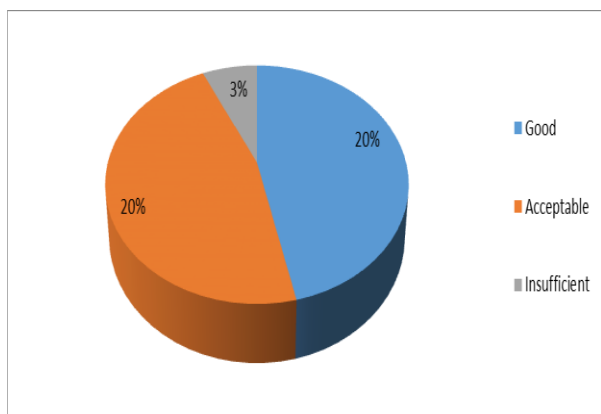


Figure 5: Assessment of salary amount by students.

2.2. Pharmacy guard service

From our work, 31% of students participate in childcare, without any financial compensation (Fig. 6).

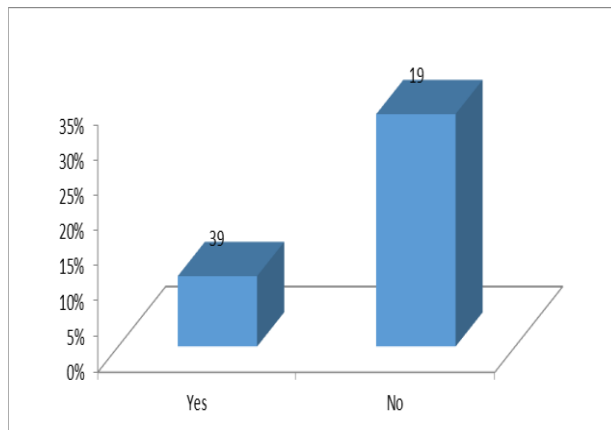


Figure 6: Participation in guard service.

3. Taxes on wages

In our study, only 18% of employees benefit from contribution to social security provision institute and social security office. As for income tax collection, it is made in 6% of students (fig.7).

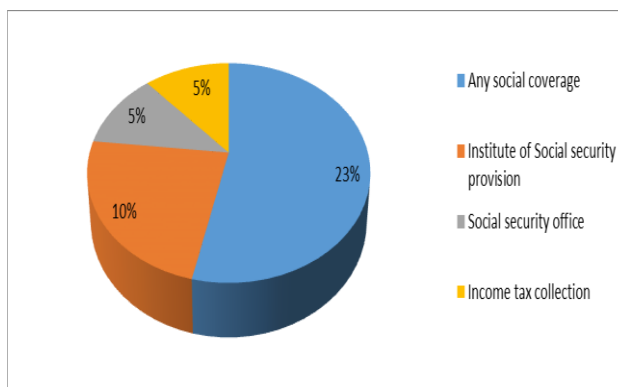


Figure 7: List of tax collection on wages.

4. Assessment of working conditions satisfaction

Our results show that 32% of students had little or no satisfaction with their conditions (fig.8).

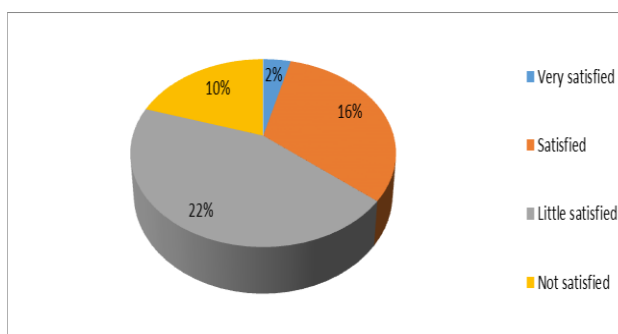


Figure 8: Students satisfaction level according working conditions.

III.3. Working conditions of assistant pharmacists

1. Existence of an employment contract

Our work shows that 28% of pharmacists who held assistant position, had an employment contract, particularly (18%) as a fixed-term contract and (10%) as

a permanent contract; against (15%) who did not have one (Fig. 9).

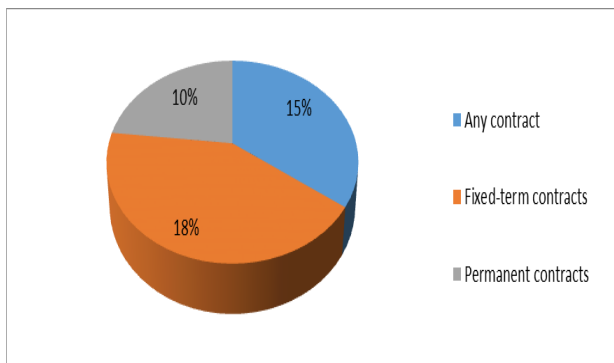


Figure 9: Employment contract type.

2. Staff remuneration

The first observation is that all the assistants interviewed have a salary higher than 100,000 CFA francs, with a disparity from one assistant to another. Three percent (3%) have an estimated salary between 100,000 and 150,000 CFA francs; twenty percent (20%) have an acceptable salary between 150,000 and 200,000, and 20% consider them a satisfactory salary (more than 200 000 FCFA) (Fig. 10).

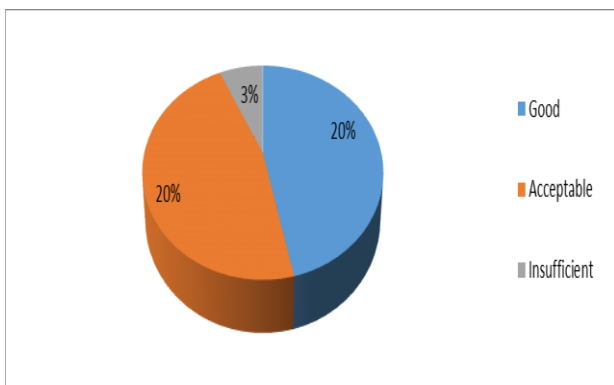


Figure 10: Assessment of salary satisfaction levels.

3. Pay slip delivery

The pay slip delivery to employee is an obligation which is not always respected at pharmacy. In our study, only 25% of assistants do not have a pay slip (Fig. 11).

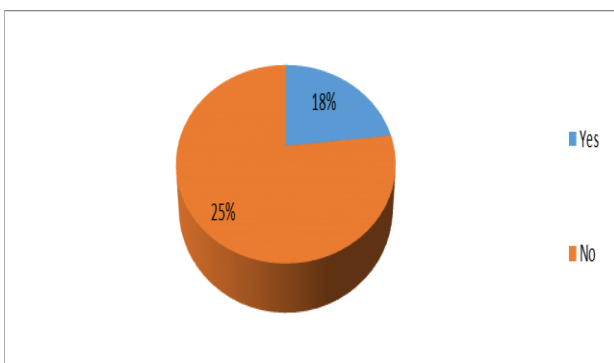


Figure 11: Delivery of a pay slip distribution.

4. Guard service

In our work (20%) of assistants who participate in guard service (fig.12), are not paid.

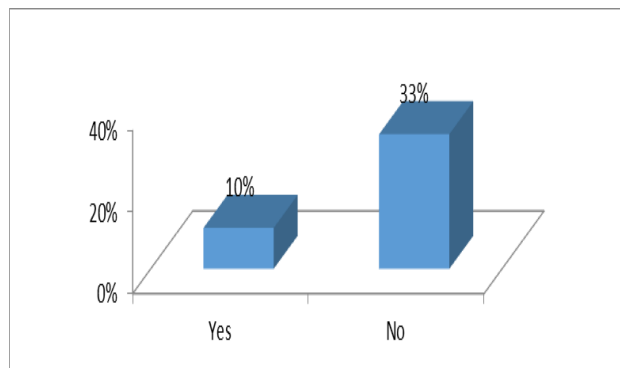


Figure 12: Participation in guard service.

5. Tax on wages

Social contributions are not well respected by employers in some assistants. Indeed, only respectively 10 and 5% of employees have a contribution to Institute of Social security provision (IPRES) and social security office (figure 13).

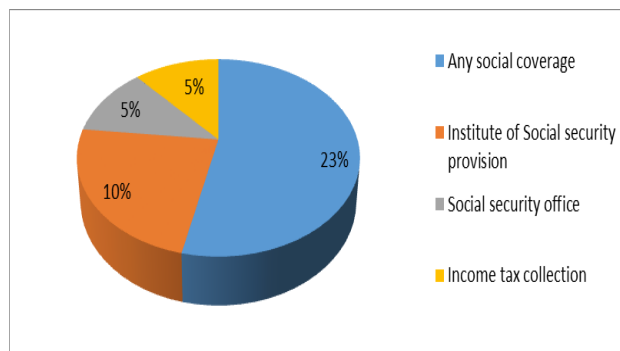


Figure 13: List of taxes collection on wages.

6. Leave

Unfortunately, all assistants of pharmacies we met in our study do not enjoy this right to leave (only 10%).

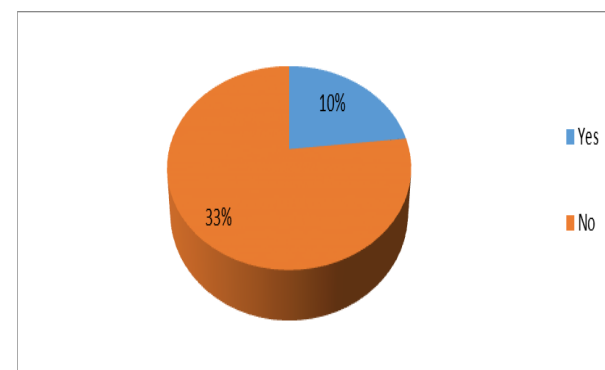


Figure 14: Breakdown leave entitlement.

7. Assessment of working conditions satisfaction level

It is clear from our work that 18% of workers are unhappy, 8% not at all satisfied, 15% satisfied and very satisfied 2% (Fig. 12).

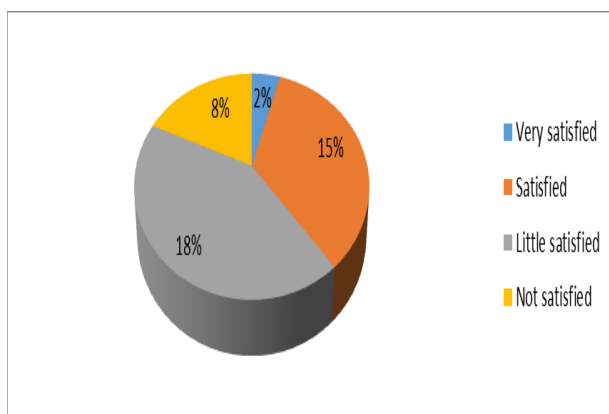


Figure 15: Working conditions satisfaction level.

IV. DISCUSSION

IV.1 Characteristics of pharmacy employees

This is basically students and assistants pharmacists, with a predominance of male employees (61%), against female (39%). This could be explained by the fact that girls in science series rate, is less than that of boys. Indeed, it would be 30% against 70% on the side of boys.^[5] In addition, only students holding a bachelor's degree in science can apply for a pharmacy orientation and become future pharmacists. Our results are different from those of literature, where a report of demographic pharmacists in 2017 reveal in France profession feminization including 81% of assistants pharmacists.^[6]

Concerning age of main pharmacists collaborators, most of employees interviewed are relatively young, with an average of 30 years old. This could be explained by profession renewal with a majority of young people; and also by the fact that key employees are interns or graduates students who make pharmacy as first option.

Regarding professional categories of our work, we find three types of employees, represented by students (50%), assistants and pharmacists that hold a doctorate in pharmacy (43%), and other employees (7%).

Students have the most important fringe of pharmacy employees with 50%. The remaining 50% is divided between graduates (40% assistants) or (young doctors 3%) and other employees (7%). These data are in line with professional category survey results, where 50% of participants are students (Figure 3). This finding may explain the 28 years old frequency.

At this level, our results are close to those of France, where we see profession renewal. The average old of pharmacists is 46,7 years old with a significant portion of less than 33 years old.^[6] Besides students who did not work, we find doctors and assistants pharmacists.

Assistants and young doctors in pharmacies represent respectively (40%) and (3%) of respondents with low age of 30-40 years old. This finding could be explained by two phenomena. Either beyond 30 pharmacists begin

to become full, which excludes them from the investigation; or they work in sectors of activities other than pharmacy. Indeed, the last hypothesis is more likely and has been found in France, with a decline of 5.7% in pharmacy section in a decade, while industry and hospital pharmacy sections raise in same period, with respectively 13.1% and 39.4%.^[6]

Concerning other employees of pharmacies found in the survey, it could be salesmen with several profiles (former medical representatives, pharmacy managers...); but also support staff, cashiers present at the pharmacy.^[7]

IV.2. Student Working conditions

Weak employment contracts among students is explained by the fact that they were still being trained, or had just validated their fifth year study of pharmacy without thesis. There were also financial constraints related to pharmacists obligation to comply with labor law, because they didn't sign contract with students. Indeed, the contract would include student registration to IPRES and social security.^[8]

Moreover, our country did not have specific regulations for this professional category as in France, where students in lower year old could have learning or obtain professional contract and a salary.^[9]

However, this gap has been repaired in Senegal in 2015, with decree that specify some elements, including remuneration.

In terms of pay, disparities in student salary levels could be related to the absence of a pharmacy collective agreement. Indeed, the pharmacist must respect minimum wage guaranteed of 47,700 CFA francs. In addition, transport allowance of 20,800 francs can be add, and makes a minimum wage of 68,500 CFA francs. Suddenly, pharmacist is regular with 12% of students who feel that their salary is very insufficient (between 50,000 and 100,000 CFA francs). Moreover, if based on trade agreement and classification of CREDAT, wages paid by pharmacists from 122,844 francs CFA and over were in compliance with existing standards (Fig. 5). Our results differ from those of France, which has its own pharmacists collective agreement and a defined salary scale.

Furthermore, the non-inclusion of pharmacy guard service, could be explained by their status on one hand, and secondly because they do not have a labor contract that would specify their participation or no to guard service.

As for social security contributions, they are due by personnel employers under Labor Code.^[13] Failure by employers on obligations respect could be linked to most students precarious status, who are not often reported to labor inspectorate.

Regarding the level of working conditions satisfaction, some believe to be operated because employer justifies this as a contribution to their training. This finding would explain that they agree to work by facing that situation. However, they will tend to change employers hope to have better working conditions.

Regarding 18% who consider themselves very satisfied or satisfied with their situation, it can be explained by following up pharmacists recommendations. Also, it could be related to differential compensation offered by certain pharmacists, that can raise wages amount.^[14]

IV.3 Working conditions of pharmacists assistants

Our work shows that 28% of pharmacists who held the position of assistant had an employment contract, particularly (18%) as a fixed-term contract and (10%) as a permanent contract; against (15%) who did not have one.

Regarding the fringe holding a contract, the high rate of permanent contract (18%) shows that assistants pharmacists did not intend to register in time. Indeed, the most common periods are 24 and 36 months, an average of two to three years at the same pharmacy; including as appropriate, years where assistant was still student. Regarding the fringe holding permanent contracts (10%), it is low in Senegal, except in France, where its common, because less expensive in long term.^[15]

Thus, most of workers interviewed have either a fixed-term or a permanent contract. This would be due to the fact that professional of assistant pharmacist was closely linked to existence of a contract. Also, to be assistant pharmacist, he had to respect terms and conditions of exercise. However, for 15% absence of contract could be explained by their non-inclusion in college of pharmacists, where employment contract is a prerequisite.

During term of a contract, all workers should receive a net monthly remuneration, split into categorical salary, transport allowance, variable premium to achieve a net salary.^[16] The first observation is that all assistants pharmacists interviewed have a salary greater than 100,000 f CFA, with a disparity from an assistant to another.

This variation on the method of compensation is explained by the absence of an own pharmacists collective agreement. However, according to trade agreements and inter-trade CREDAT, a salary of 150,000 francs CFA could be considered acceptable. Indeed that is the case in most pharmacies where 40% of assistants pharmacists have at least 150,000 francs CFA. In France a pharmacist is beginning with a net salary of 1914 Euros, that corresponds to 1,253,670 francs CFA, almost 10 times higher than in Senegalese counterpart.

Pay slip delivery to employees is an obligation that is not always respected in dispensary. But it is an important supporting document for any employee. Indeed, his absence could deprive information on remuneration method, including salary category, awarded bonuses, deductions. For 18% who are concerned this situation could be related to the fact that they would have a work contract.

Guard service is not respected in our work nor paid. However, every hour of overtime worked during night hours and weekly rest day or during holidays, has to be paid with an increase rate between 50 and 100%.^[17] This could be explained by employers non-compliance with this obligation. Also, it could be explained by the fact that some assistants pharmacists are practicing in pharmacies that do not provide guard service, or do not have an employment contract. As for social security contributions, they are not well respected by employers. Most assistants pharmacists are obliged to cover their families in case of illness or accidents. These findings explain some employers non-compliance with labor law.^[18] Furthermore, there is young pharmacists social insecurity, and some disputes with pharmacists who do not intend a long-term collaboration. Also, leave right is an obligation for every assistant pharmacist.^[19] Unfortunately, all assistants pharmacist met in our study do not enjoy it (only 10%). It could be explained by a lack of knowledge of labor law (Fig. 11). However, assistant pharmacist who is denied this right by his employer, could bring a civil action.^[20]

Most assistants pharmacists are not satisfied with their working conditions. Their situation could be explained by the low level of wages, which drives them to other areas where they receive better pay. Indeed, medical examination seems to attract more and more assistants pharmacists. Studies provided by Diene in 2004,^[21] showed that (83%) of medical representatives were trained pharmacist. Also, they had to exercise earlier in the pharmacy (56.7%), assistants pharmacists function.

CONCLUSION

Students occupy the most important segment, with an average old of 28 years; they are followed by assistants and graduates, whose average old is 30 years. Also, there is a predominance of male employees, and a tendency to employee turnover. However, most employees are not satisfied with working conditions. Staff remuneration system is suffering from a specific legal basis in pharmacy, and social coverage is low as for students and assistants. Therefore, to improve employees conditions, a pharmacy collective agreement will be developed.

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