



ORAL HISTORIES AS A TOOL FOR RESEARCH AND TEACHING

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New Zealand is a relatively young country and thus the scope for research into the history of our profession is limited primarily to information and artefacts available from the period of first European settlement, just over 150 years ago. Another rich source of information is the personal history of pharmacists themselves, using the tools of oral history taking.

Consequently, students in this School have interviewed a number of older pharmacists throughout New Zealand during the last 20 years and have collated much of the information obtained from these histories. This has provided us with a rich picture of pharmacy practice in this country during the last 70 plus years - and is made even richer when told in the voices of the pharmacists themselves.

Pharmacy is a rapidly evolving profession, whose knowledge base and nature of practice have changed considerably over this time period.

Pharmacists' experiences and memories are priceless, so we have considered it most important to document them for future generations before this knowledge is lost forever.

Many aspects have changed, notably the educational system, gender and ethnic balance as well as the nature of practice itself. Today's students are thus able to identify from these stories those aspects of their chosen profession that are ongoing as well as those that have developed into something quite different. In this way, they are encouraged to appreciate that to appreciate one's history is to enhance one's present.