

A day in the life of a phlebotomist

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To most of you, perhaps the word 'phlebotomist' may sound strange and peculiar. Believe me, phlebotomy is not some sort of black magic practiced by the Amazonian tribes, but is a valid and much sought after medical skill. Phlebotomy means to draw out blood from the human body for medical purposes like transfusion or testing. A phlebotomist is a professional who specializes in the task of drawing out blood from a human body (About. com, 2009). Therefore, by now you must be aware of whom a phlebotomist is. Yes, this is my profession. This is how I make a living, by drawing out blood from people.

Earlier, phlebotomy was a skill primarily learned on the job. However, things are no more the same as they used to be. Today, to qualify for the job of a phlebotomist, a person needs to have a high school diploma, followed by a six-week certification course in phlebotomy. One specialty that makes me an ideal candidate for the job of a phlebotomist is my exceptional tolerance for blood and other body fluids. In that context, I consider myself a brave person.

My job starts early in the morning. However, occasionally I do get a little late for work. Still, having been an experienced employee it has stopped giving me much emotional pangs, considering the fact that I am mostly the

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last person to be relieved (Ashford and St. Peter's Hospitals, 2009). The day starts with a friendly tete-a-tete with the colleagues. However, as the clock ticks, the impending work pressure makes me more serious and I proceed with my daily routine defined by heaps of medical forms and the hospital air laden thick with the smell of body fluids and disinfectants. I well understand that my work is of crucial significance for the organization for which I work and I am an integral part of our medical laboratory team, whose task is to collect blood samples, label them and to dispatch them promptly for further processing and tests.

I arrive at the patient area around 8: 00 am and by that time; the place is mostly overcrowded with patients waiting to deposit samples of their blood. There is no denying the fact that early in the morning, the patients do tend to be a little impatient and restless and almost each and everyone of them expects me to relieve her on a priority basis. Therefore, you see, I need to retain loads of equanimity and poise during work. I especially have the knack for making patients feel calm and easy and often succeed in assuring most of them that being patient and standing in a queue will help them and other patients. Then there are special requests to be considered, like patients who are not well, old and aged patients and diabetics who have been fasting and hence ought to be relieved on a priority basis (Ashford and St. Peter's Hospitals, 2009).

My job calls for a lot of tight rope walking on my part. While I am convincing the patients waiting for glucose tolerance tests to come the next day as they have not fasted the previous day, suddenly I realize that its Hematology Clinic that day and the number of samples to be collected increases by 20 to 25 (Ashford and St. Peter's Hospitals, 2009). In the mean time there may

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barge in a concerned mother with a child who is hyper with needles and is yelling at the thought of giving his first blood sample (Ashford and St. Peter's Hospitals, 2009). By that time, one of the waiting patients may faint giving way to an emergency to be dealt with. No doubt, though I prefer to be methodical, my work scenario is always not as organized as people usually consider it to be. I have to bear with my share of trouble shooting and stress management.

Things start to get a bit less hectic by lunch. Evenings are the time to clear, conduct the daily audit and to stock up for the next day. I am especially respected by the nurses, doctors and other medical personnel working at the hospital as my work and assistance allows them to work on more urgent and important tasks. Besides, I need to exhibit communication skills while interacting with colleagues, supervisors and especially clients.

At the end of the day, I leave the hospital premises with the satisfaction that I did a good job. I like what I do and my job is giving me ample experience, which will come handy the day I will become a full-fledged nurse.

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