SCIENCE JOBS IN THE GOVERNMENT

Jane Sohn, Ph.D.
US Food and Drug Administration
February 2016
Overview

• Science jobs in government
• Civil Service System
• Search for Federal Jobs
• Where have I been, and where am I now?
• What is work like as a Pharmacologist/Toxicologist at FDA?
Where Do PhD and Scientists Work?

**Academia**
- Universities

**Industry**
- Pharmaceutical industry
- Contract Research Organizations (CRO)
- Special interest groups (associations, federations, etc)
- Private firms (private practice - DVMs, consulting)

**Government**
- Federal
- State (e.g., California)
- International (World Health Organization, etc)
US Governmental Science Jobs

Research agencies
- NIH
- NTP
- CDC/NIOSH
- EPA
- USDA

Regulatory agencies
- OSHA
- FDA (research also)
- EPA
- USDA

Enforcement agencies
- FBI
- DHS (Dept of Homeland Security)
- DoD (Dept of Defense)
- DEA (Drug Enforcement Agency)
Permanent jobs are based on merit. To be hired, you must compete.

- The Pendleton Civil Service Reform Act of 1883: most federal government employees would be hired based on merit and/or exams.
- Hatch Act of 1939 - federal employees cannot participate in political activities on duty or campaigns off duty.
- Civil Service Reform Act of 1978 – further reforms to the structure of the Civil Service System and oversight.

Applicants are scored (1-100) on a scale by 3rd parties (in HR). Top candidates forwarded.

- Exception: up to 30 extra points can be given if they are veterans and/or disabled.

Hiring Division chooses from the pre-screened list.

- A Division may prescreen you (CV, interview)
Search for US Government Jobs

  - Examples: Pharmacologist – 0405, Toxicologist – 0415, Biologist – 0401
- OPM (www.OPM.gov) posts annual GS scale ("white collar" jobs) that has the annual pay grade and locality adjustment.
- Search www.usajobs.com using your series number, or key word

12/7/2015
0415: 6 results
“Toxicologist”: 78
WHERE HAVE I BEEN? WHERE AM I NOW? HOW IS WORK?
Personal Career Track

• Undergraduate (S.B. Biology, focus on molecular)
  • Research:
    • Chemical Engineering: Tissue engineering in 3D bioreactor device
    • Medical: Clinical trial to study circadian rhythm

• Graduate (Ph.D. Applied Biological Sciences/Toxicology)
  • Environmental toxicology/biological toxicology/experimental toxicology/microbiology/immunology
  • Trained in Division of Toxicology/Biological Engineering & Division of Comparative Medicine under Ph.D. (Microbiology/Immunology) and D.V.M. (GI animal models)
    • Studied *Helicobacter* as model of inflammation and carcinogenesis

• Postdoctoral Training (National Cancer Institute)
  • Cancer Research Training Fellow in Lab for Human Carcinogenesis, under M.D. preceptor
  • Inflammation, carcinogenesis (colon/lung), microRNA, cancer biomarkers
    • *In vitro* experiments with primary human cells and cell lines
    • *In vivo* mouse experiments with chemical carcinogen
    • *Ex vivo* experiments with human tissue
• FDA is made up of 6 Centers
  Center for Food Safety and Nutrition
  Center for Veterinary Medicine
  Center for Devices and Radiological Health
  Center for Tobacco Products
  Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research
    Vaccines and blood products, gene therapy
  Center for Drug Evaluation and Research
    Mostly therapeutic pharmaceuticals

• The FDA can be used for career development, as well as a career.

• Public service is very rewarding.
FDA: Review Staff Scientists

• **Pharmacologists/Toxicologists**
  Review Nonclinical (animal) Studies
  • Primary reviewer
    • CDER/Office of New Drugs/Office of Drug Evaluation II/Division of Pulmonary, Allergy, and Rheumatology Products (Rx).
    • Consults to Office of Drug Security, Integrity and Recalls (ODSIR), Center for Devices and Radiological Health (CDRH), Office of New Drug Quality Assessment (ONDQA), Division of Medical Imaging Products, Office of Generic Drugs (OGD)
  • Team Lead
    • CDER/OND/ODEIV/Division of Nonprescription Drug Products

• **Chemists and Microbiologists**
• **Medical Officers (MDs), Clinical Analysts, Clinical Pharmacologists, Statisticians, Social Scientists, etc.**
  Review Clinical (human) Studies
• **Veterinary Scientists (CVM)**
Contact Information

Jane Sohn
US Food and Drug Administration
OND/CDER/ODEIV/ONDP
10903 New Hampshire Ave
Silver Spring, MD 20993
Jane.sohn@fda.hhs.gov

Thank you to L. Peyton Myers for slides (DAVP)
FDA: Requirements, Compensation and Benefits

- Financial disclosure
- Ethics: disclosure/approval of outside activities
- Confidentially
- GS schedule for Pharmacology/Toxicology reviewer
- Standard federal benefits
  - Annual leave, sick leave, holidays.
  - Insurance, FSA, Thrift Savings Plan (TSP)...
- Work scheduled: standard, flexible schedule, flexible workplace
- Training opportunities
- Interactions w/industry, public (stakeholders)