The year 2005 witnessed significant changes in the way in which the Register of Pharmaceutical Chemists was organised. The introduction of the two-part Register, which differentiates between practising and non-practising pharmacists, appears to have resulted in a sizeable number (3,954) of pharmacists leaving the Register in 2005. Most leavers at this time were over retirement age, were not working or lived overseas, so loss to the pharmacy labour market was not thought to be significant. In addition the number of new entrants to the Register in 2005 continued to show an upward trend. This article explores the state of the Register one year on, reporting demographic data on pharmacists on the Register at the beginning of August 2006 and providing demographic data on entrants and people who left in the period between 5 August 2005 and 4 August 2006.

Demographics and changes
On 4 August 2006, there were 47,068 pharmacists on the Register of Pharmaceutical Chemists, 55.5 per cent of whom were female. This represents an increase of 672 pharmacists on the Register of Pharmaceutical Chemists, 55.5 per cent of whom were female. This represents an increase of 672 pharmacists on the previous year, an overall growth of 1.4 per cent.

The number of women on the Register is continuing to rise steadily, with an annual growth of 3.6 per cent since 2005. For the second year running however, the number of men has fallen. This is in contrast to the small but consistent growth in the number of men joining the Register witnessed between 2002 and 2004.

Table 1 shows the age and gender breakdown of the current pharmacist population. Nearly half of the Register (47 per cent) is aged under 40 years old. Female pharmacists are younger than males: 55.5 per cent of females are under 40 years of age, compared with 38.5 per cent of males. The mean age of women is 40 years compared with 46 years for men.

Women outnumber men by almost two to one in the under-30 age group. Most pharmacists in the over-50 age group are male (59.7 per cent). Fourteen per cent of men on the Register are aged 70 years or over.
working outside pharmacy.3 actively employed and two thirds of these practising pharmacists were recorded as being (10.6 per cent, n=795) of these non-ous census in 2005 only a small proportion part of the Register. At the time of the previous register closely matches the age distribution of all registrants as a whole, but non-practising pharmacists are generally older, with 43 per cent aged 60 years or more. The mean age of non-practising pharmacists is 55 years compared with 40 years for practising pharmacists.

Registered addresses of pharmacists Most pharmacists on the Register have registered addresses in England (76.3 per cent); 9.3 per cent have registered addresses in Scotland and 4.8 per cent in Wales. In 2006, 4,484 pharmacists on the Register had a registered address overseas, accounting for 9.5 per cent of the total Register. Women are in the majority among the overseas pharmacists, representing 53.8 per cent.

Practising and non-practising

Compared with 2005 there is a larger number (n=7,534) of the non-practising register but who were working in a pharmacy-related job at the time of the previous census in 2005 only a small proportion (10.6 per cent, n=795) of these non-practising pharmacists were recorded as being actively employed and two thirds of these pharmacists (64.4 per cent, n=512) were working outside pharmacy.1

Of the pharmacists who are currently on the non-practising Register but who were working in a pharmacy-related job at the time of the 2005 census, more than half (53.4 per cent, n=151) were working part time and more than a third (36.7 per cent, n=90) were working less than 10 hours per week. Two thirds (66.8 per cent, n=189) were employed in the community pharmacy sector and most of these (65.6 per cent, n=124) were employed as community pharmacy locums.

The age distribution of pharmacists on the practising register closely matches the age distribution of all registrants as a whole, but non-practising pharmacists are generally older, with 43 per cent aged 60 years or more. The mean age of non-practising pharmacists is 55 years compared with 40 years for practising pharmacists.

Men make up more than half (51.2 per cent) of the non-practising pharmacists on the register, but represent a much smaller proportion (43.2 per cent) of the practising section of the Register. Among both practising and non-practising pharmacists women are younger than men: 38 years compared with 49 years for practising pharmacists, and 43 years compared with 60 years for non-practising pharmacists. More than a third (36.1 per cent) of non-practising female pharmacists are aged 39 years or under and more than half (57.7 per cent) are aged under 49 years.

A small proportion (3.7 per cent, n=1467) of the practising register have registered addresses overseas. 81.2 per cent are located in England, 9.9 per cent in Scotland and 5.1 per cent in Wales. Overseas pharmacists represent a much larger proportion (40 per cent, n=3,017) of the non-practising register, although 50.6 per cent are located in England.

Age and gender of new entrants

The number of pharmacists entering the profession in 2006 has increased by 8 per cent (Table 2). This is a larger increase than in the previous 12 months with the growth largely attributed to female students. Men are younger than women (27.7 years compared with 29.1 years for female and males, respectively. A small proportion (3.7 per cent, n=1467) of the practising pharmacists have registered addresses overseas. 81.2 per cent are located in England, 9.9 per cent in Scotland and 5.1 per cent in Wales. Overseas pharmacists represent a much larger proportion (40 per cent, n=3,017) of the non-practising register, although 50.6 per cent are located in England.

Ethnicity

White British, White Irish and White Other ethnic groups represent 73.3 per cent of the Register, where ethnic origin is recorded (6,530 pharmacists did not provide this information). Eighteen per cent of the Register population has a recorded ethnicity of Indian, Pakistani or Bangladeshi, Chinese and Black or Other ethnic minority groups each account for approximately 3 per cent of the total. In contrast to the Register as a whole, new entrants are more ethnically diverse (Table 4). Fifty-eight per cent of new entrants with a recorded ethnic group are white, compared with 73.3 per cent of all pharmacists on the Register (where ethnicity is known). Almost a quarter (24.4 per cent) of new entrants are Asian or Asian British, compared with 18.2 per cent of the register as a whole. Black and Chinese ethnic groups account for a greater proportion of the new entrant population than for the Register as a whole.

Leavers

Pharmacists who left the Register between August 2005 and August 2006 numbered 3,594. Almost three-fifths (58.0 years) age was unknown for 120 leavers (6.2 per cent). Female leavers were generally younger than their male counterparts. The mean age of male leavers was 63.6 years compared with 51.0 years for women. The mode age of female leavers is 27.0 compared with a mode age for male leavers of 69.9 years. The age and gender distribution of leavers is shown in Table 1. Sixty-five per cent of leavers under the age of 40 are female. Male pharmacists make up 70.5 per cent of leavers aged over 65

The mean age of new entrants is 27.7 years compared with 29.1 years for females and 27.0 years for males.
years (613 men compared with 257 women). Pharmacists over state pension age (60 years for women and 65 years for men) make up 49.0 per cent of the total population of leavers where age is known. Men make up 64.8 per cent of those leaving who are over SPA (613 out of 946).

Almost a third of leavers (29.4 per cent) had a registered address overseas: 41.7 per cent of pharmacists leaving the Register who were under state pensionable age were registered overseas (361/866).

At the time of the 2005 census, 15.3 per cent (199/1,932) of the leavers were employed in a pharmacy-related occupation. Like the non-practising group of pharmacists, most of the leavers who were working at the time of the 2005 census worked in community pharmacy (83.4 per cent; 166/199) and of those 63.9 per cent (115/166) worked as community pharmacy locums.

More than two-thirds (69.2 per cent, 128/185) of the leavers who reported working at the time of the 2005 census were working part-time, with 27.0 per cent (50/185) per cent working less than 10 hours per week.

**Summary**

Although there has been a larger increase in the number of pharmacists entering the Register this year than there was last year, overall growth is smaller than in previous years, with the exception of 2005, when more pharmacists left the Register than joined.

The increasing feminisation of the Register continues, while the number of men on the Register has fallen for the second year running. The increase number of women on the Register may also account for the fact that almost half of those on the Register are now under the age of 40 years.

If the pharmacists on the Register, 16 per cent are on the non-practising register. Although at first sight this would appear to represent a significant proportion of the Register, it should be noted that the majority of these non-practising pharmacists were not practising pharmacy at the time of the most recent census, suggesting that many of those on the non-practising register are retired pharmacists or pharmacists who have chosen no longer to work in pharmacy but who wish to maintain their link with the Royal Pharmaceutical Society. Pharmacists with a registered address overseas make up a significant proportion of the non-practising register.

**References**