

The Pharmacy Practice Research Trust



Medicines & People

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Media Release

Date:

Study calls for more access to Welsh language services in Welsh community pharmacies

Welsh speakers' access to Welsh-language pharmacy services depends on where they live says a new research report published by the Pharmacy Practice Research Trust (the Trust) which studied the role of Welsh language in community pharmacy in Wales. Availability of services through the medium of Welsh was found to depend on the distribution of the Welsh-speaking population. Although almost 60% of pharmacies in Wales do not provide an option for customers to speak Welsh with pharmacy staff, this varied widely between different areas of Wales ranging from no pharmacies in areas with a small Welsh-speaking population offering this option, to 100% of pharmacies in areas with a large Welsh-speaking population providing Welsh-language services.

Louise Hughes and colleagues from the Welsh School of Pharmacy and the Welsh Institute for Health and Social Care, University of Glamorgan also found that while almost all pharmacies whose customers were mostly Welsh speakers offered services in Welsh, almost 60% of pharmacies with some Welsh-speaking customers did not offer such a service. Over a quarter (28.1%) of the pharmacies said they had no Welsh speaking customers, 57% had some and 14.7% had mostly Welsh-speaking customers. 76% of pharmacies in Wales responded to the study and they indicated that all staff members spoke English,

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18.8% spoke Welsh while a further 2.7% had basic skills in the Welsh language or were currently learning it. Pharmacists were more likely than other staff members to be Welsh-speaking, although nearly 70% (68.9) of pharmacies had no Welsh-speaking pharmacist available.

Some pharmacies who offered services through the medium of Welsh used posters and badges to inform customers but the majority (86.5%) relied on local knowledge, meaning that many Welsh-speakers may not realise they have this option.

“Some respondents commented that the value of Welsh language pharmacy services was particularly high for such groups as children and the elderly” said Louise Hughes, of the Welsh School of Pharmacy who led the project. “However, other respondents commented that while they had no demand for Welsh services locally, there was a need for provision of services in Asian and Eastern European languages.”

In conclusion, Dr Hughes said, “While it is encouraging that a large number of pharmacies have Welsh-speaking staff, ideally all Welsh speakers should have access to pharmacy services through the medium of Welsh, regardless of where they live. Although it may not be easy, or indeed practical, for all pharmacists working in Wales to be able to speak Welsh, consideration should be given to the needs of Welsh speakers.”

“To date there has been very little research into the use of Welsh language in pharmacy” commented Dr Sue Ambler, Director of the Pharmacy Practice Research Trust which commissioned the study. “It has raised a number of issues including the wide regional differences in Welsh speaking, the need for more promotion of Welsh-speaking services, the requirements for language training but

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most importantly, the survey has raised awareness of this important issue with the pharmacists of Wales.”

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Notes to editors:

1. *The role of the Welsh language in community pharmacy service provision in Wales*, Louise Hughes, C Brookes, C Cocker, DN John, AT Jones & M Longley*, Welsh School of Pharmacy, Cardiff University and *Welsh Institute for Health and Social Care, University of Glamorgan - <http://www.rpsgb.org/informationresources/download/societypublications/#r>
2. Method: a self-complete postal questionnaire was sent to every community pharmacy in Wales (n=715). The names and addresses of all community pharmacies in Wales were obtained on application from the Royal Pharmaceutical Society of GB. After two follow-up mailings, a response rate of 76% was achieved.
3. The study was commissioned by the Pharmacy Practice Research Trust with a grant from the Leverhulme Trade Charities Trust.
4. The Pharmacy Practice Research Trust

The Pharmacy Practice Trust was established in July 1999 as an independent research charity with a broad objective to promote and develop the field of pharmacy practice research. Its trustees are drawn from senior health policy makers, leading academics, industrialists and retailers. For further information email: practiceresearch@rpsgb.org