



Medicines & People

Turning Knowledge Into Know-How

The Pharmacy Practice Research Trust

Research Bulletin

April 2009

Issue 4

Editorial

2009 sees the 10th anniversary of the Trust. We were established in 1999 by the RPSGB as an independent research charity to raise and administer funds to support the development of health services research in pharmacy.

This important development for pharmacy practice research was stimulated by a number of factors. Firstly, in 1999 the DH published a new strategy for community pharmacy underlining the need for evidence through high quality research, to inform the development of professional practice and delivery of patient services. Secondly, a Pharmacy Practice R&D Task Force was set up by the RPSGB and recommended that if practice research is to fuel an evaluative culture, it must meet quality criteria and would need access to an appropriately trained research workforce supported by a strong research infrastructure. Acknowledging the importance of the research base the RPSGB subsequently established the Trust.

The Trust has since commissioned c. £1.5M of research that has contributed to the pharmacy practice evidence base and also responded to the identified shortfall and access to an appropriately trained workforce. Through its grants and awards programme c. 50 pharmacists have developed their research skills, and many gone on to an academic career.

But we have come full circle. Last year, the DH published a White Paper for Pharmacy acknowledging that the evidence base needed to influence commissioning of the wider range of services envisaged for pharmacy needs to be more robust. The Trust organised a research summit, reported in this bulletin and a proposed strategic direction for pharmacy practice research has been developed by the summit's participants which will soon be published. It provides a way forward both for the Trust to continue its advocacy and contribution to pharmacy practice research as well as identifying priority research areas and the infrastructure needed to deliver it.

Mr Peter Curphey, Trustee

A Strategic Direction for Pharmacy Practice Research

The Trust hosted a research summit on the 6th November 2008 to bring together key stakeholders across pharmacy and academia to initiate discussions around the development of a strategic direction for pharmacy practice research following the publication in April of the White Paper for Pharmacy, *Pharmacy in England: Building on strengths – delivering the future*.

The paper stated that pharmacists should be involved in the delivery of a wider array of services but also indicated that research underpinning both clinical and commissioning decisions needs to be strengthened. The need for further development of the evidence base across all devolved administrations is also stated in the strategies for pharmaceutical care in Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales. There is a great deal of aspiration within these strategies, however, increasing cognitive services will require evidence of outcomes not previously linked with contractual arrangements for pharmacy. Current research and the resources to support research are far from commensurate with the Government's ambitions.

To ensure that pharmacy can play its part in meeting UK Governments' objectives for health services, patient choice and access to care there now needs to be a coordinated strategic programme for pharmacy research and development comparable in scale to that in place in other countries, such as Australia. The event centred on presentations by:



Professor Bill Scott speaking at the event



Professor Charlie Benrimoj discussing the Australian Research and Development Agreement

Dr Keith Ridge

Chief Pharmaceutical Officer,
Department of Health, England

Dr Norman Morrow

Chief Pharmaceutical Officer,
Department of Health, Northern
Ireland

Professor Bill Scott

Chief Pharmaceutical Officer,
Department of Health, Scotland

Dr Dai John

Head of Clinical Pharmacy, Welsh
School of Pharmacy

Professor S C Benrimoj

Pro-vice Chancellor (Strategic
Planning) & Professor of Pharmacy
Practice, University of Sydney

Professor Sally Davies

Director of R & D, Department of
Health

Continued overleaf...

A Strategic Direction for Pharmacy Practice Research – continued...

The presentations were followed by workshops around 5 key areas:

- Integrating Research into Practice
- Long Term Conditions
- Public Health
- Minor Ailments
- Integrating Evidence into Practice



The outputs and recommendations from participants have formed the outline of a theoretical strategic direction for pharmacy practice research which can be downloaded from the Trust website. The objectives of this document are to:

- 1) raise awareness of the critical need for investment in pharmacy practice research which will enable both the government and pharmacists to realise the vision within the White Paper;
- 2) raise awareness of the need to build research capacity in pharmacy, to build the pharmacy academic workforce and to encourage practitioner engagement with research;
- 3) identify research priority areas that must be funded to support future clinical decision making and the investment of public money in services; and,
- 4) outline the support infrastructure needed to both build research capacity and to undertake high quality research and ensure utilisation of these research findings.

The Trust would like to thank all who attended and participated in the workshops and who contributed by completing the workshop questions outside of the event. The Trust would also particularly like to thank the key note speakers.

The Trust will now use the Strategy to raise further awareness of the need for a collaborative approach to pharmacy practice research and its resourcing with stakeholders and will also use the document to inform its own commissioned research programme and research capacity building activities.

The Trust will continue to provide regular updates in relation to this workstream on the Trust website (www.pprt.org.uk) and via direct mailings.

Forthcoming Event

Workload Pressures and the Pharmacy Workforce: Supporting Professionals and Protecting the Public

Steve Churton, President of the Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain, has launched an initiative aimed at helping pharmacists cope with pressures at work.

As part of the campaign the Trust and the Society are hosting a joint symposium entitled “Workload Pressures and the Pharmacy Workforce: Supporting Professionals and Protecting the Public”.

This event will bring together key stakeholders in pharmacy to:

- share current research findings on workforce, job satisfaction, health policy and organisational and employer policies on stress and work-life balance;

- hear evidence of real cases of stress and its consequences in pharmacy; and,
- identify key areas for collective action.

Details of the event, including a draft programme, are available at:

<http://www.pprt.org.uk/Events/ForthcomingEvents.aspx>

This is an invitation only event, but if you would like to register your interest in attending this event please contact Beth Allen directly (beth.allen@rpsgb.org).

ESRC Collaborative (CASE) Studentships

With the pharmacist's growing clinical role and integration into mainstream healthcare there's an increasing need for pharmacy research to move from a largely science based professional model to one that incorporates social science and philosophy. The Trust has, therefore, been forging new collaborative academic partnerships to develop research capacity for the pharmacy profession in this way. To this end, the Trust is pleased to announce that three new partnerships have been successful in obtaining Economic and Social Research Council Collaborative (CASE) studentship funding. The titles of the studentships and the Trust's collaborating partners are detailed below:

Community pharmacists and people with dementia: issues and developments - Professor Alison Bowes, Applied Social Science, University of Stirling (1+3 year studentship).

Personalised medicine and hospital and community-based pharmacy: understanding the needs and role of pharmacists in response to innovation - Professor Andrew Webster, Sociology, University of York (+3 year studentship).

A mixed methods study of the implications for pharmacy policy and practice of self-tests for signs of serious illness - Dr Helen M Pattison, School of Life and Health Sciences, Aston University (1+3 year studentship).

The Trust will now be working closely with its partners in supporting the advertising and recruitment of these PhD studentships. Should you be interested in applying for one of the above studentships, please contact the team to discuss in more detail.

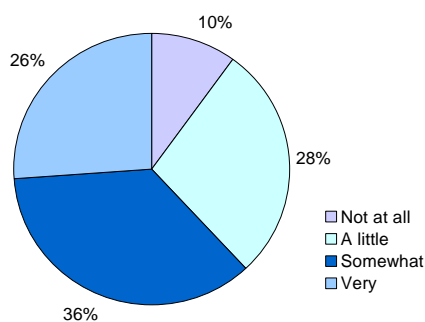
Trust Evaluation of Impact

The Trustees would like to take this opportunity to thank all those individuals who participated in the Trust's recent survey amongst our stakeholders and grant/award holders and to share some of the top level findings with you:

Broad familiarity with the Trust and its activities

The Trust has put considerable effort into raising awareness of its activities over recent years. While the Trustees recognise that there is still much work to be done, particularly at the community pharmacy practitioner level, they are encouraged by the findings of the stakeholder survey that indicated that 90% were familiar with the work of the Trust, with nearly 26% being very familiar (see fig. 1 below).

Fig 1. Stakeholder Survey: How familiar are you with the work of the Trust?



Influence of Trust published reports and studies

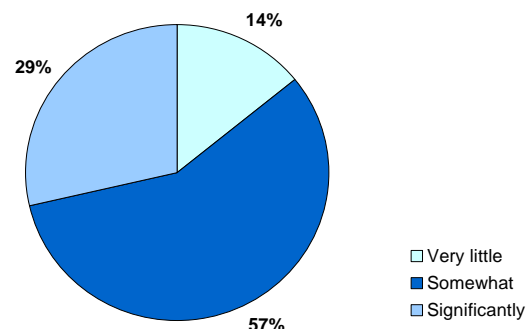
Whilst it is a major objective of the Trust to commission research and award research grants, it's important to ascertain whether the research is having any impact or influence. We asked stakeholders if they had read any Trust published reports or read about any of our commissioned work and if the results had influenced their practice or work. Around 90% reported that the report/studies read had some influence with 27% indicating a significant influence.

The Trustees recognise that these findings only reflect a proportion of stakeholder opinion within and without pharmacy and that there is still a great deal of work to be done, as reflected in the UK-wide research strategy. That said, the Trustees are encouraged by the findings and will be considering some of the more detailed comments and suggestions, and how they might address these in the future.

Research capacity building

Research capacity building in pharmacy is a key object of the Trust. All respondents that have received grants from the Trust indicated that the funding had contributed to the development of skills, research leadership and capacity in their institution (see fig. 2 below).

Fig 2. Grantholder Survey: Has the Trust contributed to the development of skills, research leadership and capacity in your institution?



Furthermore, seventy-three percent of stakeholder respondents indicated that the Trust had effected the development of the academic/research workforce.

Pump priming

The Trust has a clear role in funding small scale, pilot or feasibility studies to increase competitive opportunities for primary grant applications for pharmacy research. The survey to grantholders indicates some success in this role as 83% of respondents indicated that their Trust grant had contributed to development of further research/funding for them or their department.

Building Research Capacity in Pharmacy – Career Development Opportunities for Pharmacists

Research Training Bursaries

The Trust is increasing the opportunities for community pharmacists who are interested in developing their pharmacy practice research skills to apply for a research training bursary. There will now be two calls for applications for a bursary during the year and the first has just been announced.

The Research Training Bursary Scheme has £40,000, provided by the Leverhulme Trade Charities Trust, to annually fund a number of research projects or research training opportunities over three different levels.

The deadline for applications is **24th April 2009**.

Further details, application forms and guidance notes are available by contacting Beth Allen (tel: 020 7572 2466, email: beth.allen@rpsgb.org).

Research Awards

Pharmacists who want to start or develop a research career are being invited by the Trust to apply for a 2009 Practice Research Award.

A total of £55,000 is available for a number of grants which are open to:

- those requiring funding between PhD and post doctoral grants;
- those requiring funding to go from MPhil to PhD;
- practitioners new to research; and
- PhD students requiring ‘research costs’ to enhance their PhDs.

The deadline for applications is **22nd May 2009**.

Further information is available at:

<http://www.pprt.org.uk/ResearchFunding/2009ResearchAwards.aspx>

Forthcoming Publications

The discussion paper, *Developing Pharmacy Values: Stimulating the Debate* (RPSGB, 2000), identified the need to develop “value literacy” in pharmacy (awareness of, interest in, and capability in identifying, discussing and ‘handling’ value and ethical issues in pharmacy). The paper recognised that research was necessary if pharmacy values were to be understood and developed. Ethics was an area of research that was significantly under developed in pharmacy and one which, at the time, was best progressed through academic scholarship. To this end, the RPSGB provided short term funding to stimulate research and scholarship in the field of ethics relating to pharmacy.

Two PhDs were managed by the Trust to develop learning about the perceptions and experiences of professional values and ethics of pharmacists at an individual level.

Ailsa Benson was appointed at King’s College, based in the Centre for Public Policy Research (CPPR), School of Social Science and Public Policy. Her report “Respect for medicines and respect for people: Mapping pharmacist practitioners’ perceptions and experiences of ethics and values” (2007), based on a PhD which set out to explore and map the values and ethics of pharmacy practitioners through their self-reported day-to-day perceptions and experiences, found that current values and ethics of pharmacy practitioners provide a solid base for practice, with pharmacy emerging as a highly responsible and conscientious profession. However, a reorientation of the core values of pharmacy practice was recommended. The findings suggest that greater ethical and values literacy would make an important contribution to the pharmacy profession in two respects. Firstly, by directly supporting new and developing practice activities and responsibilities and secondly, by helping the profession to maintain and develop its broader contribution to society including medicines and health-related policy making.

Zuzana Deans was appointed at the Centre for Professional Ethics at Keele University. Zuzana has recently completed her PhD and produced a report for the Trust which is due to be published in the summer of 2009.

One of the strongest themes emerging from Zuzana’s data is the prominence of institutional rules, and a concern for the interests of the patient; pharmacists tend to be dutiful in regard to institutional rules, but are sometimes willing to break them when the interests of the patient are considered to outweigh the possible negative consequences of breaking the law. In fact, the majority of pharmacists across the sectors reported the patient’s health interests as the most important factor to consider when making ethical decisions. This finding supports that found in Ailsa Bensons research, that of the “in the patient’s best interest”.

When published, Zuzana’s report ‘Ethics in Pharmacy Practice’ will be downloadable at: <http://www.pprt.org.uk/Publications/2009Publications.aspx> and the Trust will look at the implications of this research and how best to influence both the education and practice of pharmacists for the benefit of patients and the public.