



Medicines & People

Turning Knowledge Into Know-How

The Pharmacy Practice Research Trust

Research Bulletin

October 2009

Editorial

One of the Trust's key aims is to support the development of researchers with the right skills and leadership to further pharmacy practice. Another, through our Medicines and People Programme, is to create knowledge for the public benefit that ensures that the right person gets the right medicine at the right time in a manner that meets the needs and expectations of the individual who will take it.

Both of these aims were comprehensively reflected by Dr Darren Ashcroft, this year's winner of the 2009 Practice Research Award, in his keynote lecture at BPC. Dr Ashcroft described his research programme which over the last 10 years has looked into medicines usage and safety particularly in the community setting. His presentation is reported in more detail on pages 1 & 3.

Preventing medication errors remains a specific element within the Trust's programme of work. An example of research funded within this programme is a study by Dr Rachel Howard, University of Reading who undertook a qualitative exploration of the underlying causes of drug-related morbidity in primary care which resulted in hospitalisation. This research highlighted, in particular, key communication problems within the system.

The report of this study, along with all the projects that the Trust has funded and published, can be found on our website at www.pprt.org.uk

The Trust will look to build on this work in the future, both through our research capacity building initiatives and commissioning.

Beth Allen, Acting Trust Director

Workplace Pressure Symposium

Earlier this year the Trust and RPSGB held a joint symposium, *Workload Pressures and the Pharmacy Workforce: supporting professionals and protecting the public*. The symposium, part of the President's Workplace Pressures Campaign and conducted under the Chatham House Rule in order to engender free and frank discussion, drew together leaders from throughout the profession. Representatives from trade unions, employee groups, academia and hospital pharmacy, in addition to pharmacy superintendents and pharmacy technicians were presented with leading-edge research regarding the pharmacy workforce over the two-day event. Attendees also participated in workshops in order to devise practical solutions to work-related pressure and stress issues.

Turning Evidence into Action

In September the Trust published *Turning Evidence into Action*, a post-conference brochure highlighting the findings and recommendations of the symposium. The report includes summary reports from key speakers such as Dr Phil Tucker of Swansea University, who highlighted the negative impact of long working hours.

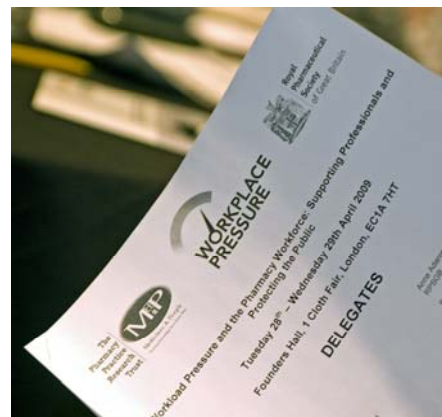
Management of prescribed medicines can put patients at risk says Pharmacy Practice Research Award winner

Dr Ashcroft, who was given the BPC Practice Research Award in recognition of his work into medicines usage and in particular quality and safety, said: "Drug related morbidity represents a substantial burden on limited healthcare resources and it is the complex system in which medicines are prescribed that can create risk for patients. In practice medication problems are often not pharmacological but rather the results of failures in the medicines management system to provide the right drug for the right diagnosis to the right patient in the right way."



His research programme over the last 10 years was described. This includes the recent completion of the largest and most definitive study of prescribing errors in hospital patients across the North West of England which has provided robust evidence for the role of hospital pharmacists acting as a 'safety net' within current medicines management arrangements. The UK General Medical Council is currently using the findings to inform a review of educational standards for medical students.

Dr Darren Ashcroft, Reader in Medicines Usage and Safety, School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Science at the University of Manchester, this year's recipient of the Pharmacy Practice Research Trust BPC Practice Research Award gave a keynote lecture at the recent practice@BPC2009.



Turning Evidence into Action was launched at this year's British Pharmaceutical Conference by RPSGB President Steve Churton in his keynote speech.

You can download a copy of *Turning Evidence into Action* [here](#).

Also, published alongside *Turning Evidence Into Action* was *Professional Workload* - a document on how other professional organisations deal with professional workload, produced by the RPSGB's Policy Division.

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Research Training Bursaries

Over the past six years the Trust has funded 15 community pharmacists to pursue research or develop an academic career through its Research Training Bursary Scheme.

One of the key aims of the Trust is to increase research capacity and capability in pharmacy practice research. This is vital to underpin building the much needed evidence base for pharmacy to support the aspirations of government policy. In response to this need, this year for the first time, the Trust widened its eligibility criteria to enable all community and PCO pharmacists to apply and extended the scheme to two calls for applications during the year.

The Trust is pleased to announce the successful bursary applicants for the first call who share a total of £45,000 funding are:

Level 1 Bursary - Penny Buckingham, a locum community pharmacist from Guernsey is to undertake a postgraduate diploma in Health Research Methods at the Institute for Health Research, Lancaster University via online distance learning.

"With the aid of the bursary I hope to obtain the necessary skills to be able to carry out health research in an efficient manner having completed the course offered at Lancaster University. I hope to be able to carry out research that is beneficial to the local community and allows my work to lead to positive outcomes which will benefit the patient".

Penny Buckingham

Level 3 Bursary - Sharuna Reddy, an Organisational Lead for Research and Development from NHS Blackburn and Darwen PCT will be funded to gain a Masters in Public Health at Liverpool University.

"My passion and professional interest has gravitated towards public health and health improvement over time, recognising the impact of wider social determinants on health for the individual and the population. I want to use the skills and knowledge from the Masters programme to develop public health competences and frame pharmacy practice through a public health lens, to develop innovative models of practice that support and improve the health and wellbeing of the population."

Sharuna Reddy

Research Awards

The Trust's Research Awards are designed to support registered pharmacists requiring funding to bridge the gap between PhD and the acquisition of post doctoral grants and those requiring funding to go from MPhil to PhD. Practitioners new to research and PhD students requiring 'research costs' to enhance their PhDs are also eligible.

The successful award applicants for 2009 sharing a total of £94,000 of funding are:

William Horsley, Pharmacist, NHS North of Tyne - Sir Hugh Linstead Fellowship

An evaluation of an integrated care pathway for Inflammatory Bowel Disease - Inflammatory bowel diseases such as ulcerative colitis and Crohn's disease are life-long conditions affecting about a quarter of a million people in the UK. Drugs constitute the principal treatment for many patients and regular review is needed to maintain optimal disease control and manage the risk of long term complications. This study will explore the impacts on quality of care, health resource utilisation and patient experience in adopting an integrated model for care of inflammatory bowel disease within a PCT in the North East of England.

Abdul-Wahid Mohammad, Lecturer in Pharmacy Practice, Robert Gordon University Aberdeen – Sir Hugh Linstead Fellowship

Evaluating the clinical outcomes of a community pharmacy cardiovascular disease clinic. A pilot study - This study aims to determine if a community pharmacy based cardiovascular (CVD) clinic conducted by a community independent pharmacist prescriber is feasible and clinically effective in practice. The study will evaluate the impact of the clinic on the number and type of medication changes per patient, repeat medicines received at baseline and follow-up, primary care consultations, patient satisfaction with the clinic, pharmacist and GP experiences of the clinic. The data generated will be used to inform the design of a larger scale randomised controlled trial.

Rod Tucker, Community Pharmacist, East Yorkshire – Sir Hugh Linstead Fellowship

An investigation into the range of skin problems encountered in community pharmacy and the extent of pharmacist engagement with patients having a skin disease - It is estimated that between a third and quarter of the population experience a skin problem at some time during their lives. There is little information on the prevalence of skin diseases seen in community pharmacy. This study will seek to determine what range of diseases community pharmacists typically see, what extent pharmacists engage with patients with skin diseases and to elicit the views of pharmacists on their potential role in managing patients with a skin disease.

In addition to project funding, two applicants were supported to undertake research training: **Samir Vohra**, Clinical Lecturer in Pharmacy Practice, University of Central Lancashire and **Stuart Gill-Banham**, Clinical Lecturer, Applied Therapeutics (Mental Health + Neuropharmacology), Medway School of Pharmacy.

The 2010 award and bursary schemes will be advertised next January. For further details please contact Charlotte Coates, Senior Research Administrator, (0207 572 2278 or charlotte.coates@rpsgb.org)

AMRC Membership

The Trust has been accepted for membership of the Association of Medical Research Charities. AMRC membership is widely regarded as a mark of quality with regard to research governance in the world of medical and health research. This represents a demonstrable commitment on the part of the Trust to working to the highest standards of practice and policy. There are many advantages to membership, such as access to a network of other research charities – potentially expanding opportunities for collaborative initiatives and opportunities for knowledge brokering. The research team is already making full use of membership and has recently attended the AMRC annual general meeting, which featured talks on patient and public involvement in research, collaboration and co-funding.



A notable change that comes with membership is that the Trust will no longer contribute to indirect costs on the research it commissions – this is AMRC policy. However, this will not disadvantage higher education institutes as they will be able to claim these indirect costs from the Charitable Research Support Fund as established by HEFCE. This means that the funds currently available for pharmacy practice research will go further, creating greater value for the profession and the public which it serves - this is particularly important at a time when research funding across all disciplines is unlikely to be sustained at past levels.

Management of prescribed medicines can put patients at risk says Pharmacy Practice Research Award winner – continued from page 1

Dr Ashcroft went on to describe his research which has focussed on quality and safety in the community setting. This has shown that when adverse incidents occur in community pharmacies, the prevailing safety culture in the organisation is a key influence on the way in which they are handled. As a consequence, existing reporting systems designed to support organisational learning from adverse events are likely to provide an incomplete picture of the extent and nature of errors in community pharmacy.



As a result of this work, he has developed the Manchester Patient Safety Assessment Framework (MaPSAF), an assessment tool which allows staff to assess the strengths and weaknesses of patient safety culture within their pharmacy and identify areas for improvement. This tool is now promoted for use in community pharmacy by the National Patient Safety Agency. Subsequently, the first ever safety climate tool designed specifically for use in pharmacy settings has also been developed and benchmarking work using this tool involving research collaborations throughout Europe is now underway.

Dr Ashcroft said: "Being told that I had won this award means a lot to me. I have been undertaking a programme of research in this area over the last decade. Improving quality and patient safety within healthcare is an international priority and this award recognises my work in the UK and its development into a wider European context."

Trust publishes report on perspectives of living with dementia

Denise Taylor, Senior Teaching Fellow, Department of Pharmacy and Pharmacology at the University of Bath explored patient and carer perspectives over time of the use of medicines for dementia and their impact on coping with day-to-day life.



The research showed that the wider improvement in personality achieved by the medicines for dementia such as improved social skills, orientation and initiative which positively affected personal and wider relationships outweighed the improvements in memory. The study, commissioned by the Trust and supported by a Galen Award, also identified a need for improved information for carers about how a dementia can affect an individual and the changed behaviours that can result. "Carers need to know that these are part of the disease and not a deliberate action on the part of the person with dementia" says Ms Taylor.

Through a series of case studies involving the patient, their carer and the associated professional team over 13 months, the study highlights some of the real issues faced by all those involved in the care of people with dementia especially when other health problems are present such as hearing or eyesight difficulties.

Says Denise Taylor; "My study also showed that patients rarely fit the assessment measurements used to guide treatment as recommended by NICE, such as the Mini Mental State Examination. This was shown to be telling 'only half the story' and did not accurately reflect for some participants the true impact of their dementia or their medication on their day to day life."

You can download a copy of *Living with medicines for dementia – patient and carer perspectives* [here](#)

Commissioning Update

How is research taught to pharmacy undergraduates? Call for study proposals

The Trust is inviting applications for a project to investigate how research principles, use and practice are taught and embedded at Undergraduate level. Pharmacy is a rapidly changing profession with the addition of more specialist services, technological developments and changing patient expectations and it is vital that educational preparation keeps pace with, and even anticipates, these changes in practice. The following priority areas have been identified for investigation:

- How is research taught at undergraduate level and what place does research have in the curriculum?
- What impact do research projects have on student appreciation of research? Do they influence their career choice? Do they influence their use of it as a tool to guide clinical decision making and practice?
- How do student research projects contribute to priorities for pharmacy practice research?
- What impact do resources have on the delivery and effectiveness of research projects?

The number of academic pharmacists has declined in the last decade which has led to an imbalance between teaching commitments and research capacity. We need to build and sustain research at a capacity where it can support pharmacy practice and medicines use. The aim of this new project is to investigate the effectiveness of research training so that any future recommendations and alterations to the MPharm curriculum are themselves evidence based.

A grant of up to £60,000 is available to fund this research. Further details and application form are available from: charlotte.coates@rpsgb.org or at: <http://www.pprt.org.uk/ResearchFunding/Commissioning.aspx>

The closing date for applications is Friday, 29th January 2010

An investigation of the relationship between identity and medication use amongst adolescents with arthritis and exploration of the role of pharmacy in delivering services to this group

The Trust, in collaboration with the charity Arthritis Care, has invited expressions of interest from research teams to investigate the relationship between identity and medication use amongst adolescents with arthritis and to explore the role of pharmacy in delivering services to this group.

There are 17,000 young people in the UK living with Rheumatoid Arthritis and 12,000 with Juvenile Idiopathic Arthritis but commonly held assumptions about arthritis are that it is an 'old person's' disease making it difficult for young people to incorporate a diagnosis into their conceptions over identity.

Chronic diseases such as these place extensive behavioural demands on adolescents and a number of studies have demonstrated that approximately 50% of adolescents with a long-term condition do not comply with care recommendations.

The deadline for submission of expressions of interest is the 2nd of November. Details of the successful research team will be published both on the web and in the next edition of the e-bulletin.

Pharmacy Practice Research Trust strengthens portfolio of research into professionalism in pharmacy

The Trust has awarded a third grant in its Professionalism in Pharmacy Practice research programme to Dr Ellen Schafheutle, Lecturer and Sarah Willis, Research Fellow at the School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences, University of Manchester, to investigate patient-centred professionalism among newly registered pharmacists.

The aim of the study is to understand and clarify how professionalism develops in pharmacists' early career years (1 -2 years) and to consider the implications of this development for the delivery of quality patient-centred care. In particular, the research team will explore early career pharmacists' perceptions about professionalism, its relation to patient-centred care and its development in pharmacy training and practice. The views of support staff and tutors involved in preregistration training will also be sought.

Ellen Schafheutle said: "We have already gained some insight into how professionalism is learnt amongst undergraduate pharmacy students, and work experience seemed to play an important role." "However," Sarah Willis continued, "little is known about the influence of the workplace and early years of practice on recently registered pharmacists' professionalism. The research grant will enable us to explore this with those who are key players in this early period of practice and professionalism."

This is a nine month study which began this month.

Pharmacy Practice Research – Coming of age?

Health Services Research and Pharmacy Practice Conference, Manchester – 12th-13th April 2010

This annual not-for-profit conference first began in 1995 to help provide a forum for pharmacy practice academics, students, practitioners, and others working in the pharmacy practice field to disseminate research findings which can inform policy and practice. It also provides an important opportunity to share ideas, to network, and to help build research capacity. It arose out of a conference organised by the Pharmacy Practice Research Resource Centre which had received funding from the Department of Health to pump-prime research in pharmacy practice. It provides a friendly forum for experienced and new researchers alike. To find out further information or to register for the conference, please go to: <http://www.hsrpp.org.uk/>