

Media release
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**Study reveals the impact on workforce of
the contractual framework for community pharmacy**

Increased workload, higher levels of stress and higher rates of delegation to support staff have resulted from the initial implementation of the contractual framework for community pharmacy (CPCF), a study reveals. The research, part of a larger body of work evaluating the implementation of the CPCF, investigated issues related to work load and job satisfaction and was led by Professor Alison Blenkinsopp of Keele University, together with Professor Christine Bond, University of Aberdeen and Gianpiero Celino, Webstar Health.

The research funded by the Pharmacy Practice Research Trust and published today reports the findings from the largest survey to date of community pharmacists undertaken since the introduction of the contract.

There was evidence that all three tiers of the CPCF led to increased community pharmacists' work load but there was a particular rise related to paperwork, the research reported. Respondents spent up to 25% of their time counselling patients and up to 25% on other management tasks in addition to existing services such as dispensing. Some community pharmacists interviewed expressed disappointment that workflow management systems to support and manage existing workload such as repeat dispensing and the electronic prescription service (EPS) had not materialised.

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Sixty-eight per cent of respondents indicated they had delegated more work to non-pharmacist staff members with a further 34 per cent indicating they planned to make other staff changes in the next year. Pharmacists providing medicine use reviews (MURs) were more likely than other responders to have devolved more work to non-pharmacists and 23 per cent had specifically employed a locum to either conduct MURs or provide cover for conducting MURs.

The report found that 58 per cent of respondents felt stressed within their job and only 17 per cent of community pharmacists stated they were more satisfied overall compared to before the contract was introduced. Pharmacists providing the MUR service were more satisfied than those who were not. Overall, only a third (33%) stated they would be likely to still be working in community pharmacy in the next ten years – a concern for future workforce planners.

The findings from the study describe experiences of pharmacists on the ground and highlight the areas that should be addressed in future planning of services, namely robust management programmes such as EPS and identification of training needs for technicians and pharmacy support staff as they move into cascaded evolving roles. Greater use of IT to reduce paperwork, as in the implementation of the Scottish community pharmacy contract, will also be important.

‘It may be that a better more appropriate skill mix is emerging, although detailed exploration of this would be needed to identify the tasks delegated, the competencies of those now delivering them, and the outcomes’, said Alison Blenkinsopp, Professor of the Practice of Pharmacy, Keele University. “These changes in the pharmacy team may result in higher job satisfaction across the team, particularly among pharmacists who report that job dissatisfaction is related to a feeling that they have insufficient time to do justice to the job. We therefore welcome the timing of the publication of the

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recent DH White Paper for pharmacy and its recognition of the need for a more robust support framework and its endorsement of the evolving role of pharmacy technicians.”

The report and an executive summary of the main findings from the full national evaluation of the CPCF is available at:

www.pprt.org.uk/Publications/2008Publications.aspx

Ends

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Notes to editors:

1. *The effect of the new community pharmacy contract on the community pharmacy workforce - a monograph based a subset of data from the evaluation of the community pharmacy contractual framework.* Christine Bond, Alison Blenkinsopp, Jackie Inch, Gian Celino, Nicky Gray. Pharmacy Practice Research Trust, June 2008 ISBN: 9780955696954

http://www.pprt.org.uk/Documents/TrustNews/The_effect_of_the_new_community_pharmacy_contract_on_the_community_pharmacy_workforce.pdf

2. Survey Response

The survey achieved a response rate of 71%. Interviews with community pharmacists and other stakeholders allowed in-depth exploration of some of the issues.

3. DH White Paper

Pharmacy in England: building on strengths – delivering the future. DH, April 2008. London.

http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_083815

4. *National evaluation of the new community pharmacy contract.* Pharmacy Practice Research Trust 2007

http://www.pprt.org.uk/Documents/Publications/National_evaluation_of_the_new_pharmacy_contract.pdf

5. The Pharmacy Practice Research Trust

The Pharmacy Practice Research Trust was established by the Royal Pharmaceutical Society of GB 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, industry and retailers.

The Trust has invested around £1m in research; 30% supporting capacity building in pharmacy practice research and 70% on commissioned research. An annual grant from the Pharmaceutical Trust for Education and Charitable Objectives contributes to the funds of the Trust.

For further information: www.pprt.org.uk