



Medicines & People
Turning Knowledge Into Know-How

The Pharmacy Practice Research Trust

Research Bulletin

March 2008

Moving forward with research

I am delighted to introduce the 2nd edition of the Trust's Research Bulletin. I am particularly pleased to draw attention to the recently announced Calls For Proposals. Professionalism in healthcare is a high profile concept and of increasingly high importance to pharmacists in light of evolving and diverse health service delivery. The Trust is interested in exploring this concept in terms of how this relates to working closer with patients and collaboratively with other professions; elements essential for future workforce and service planning.

It is also important to the Trust to develop and underpin the evidence base for new community pharmacy services, both in terms of patient outcomes and of value for money. The new contract has opened the door for a range of innovative service developments but there is need for better evidence in terms of cost-effectiveness and patient benefits if they are to be widely supported by PCTs. We hope the collaborative grants will go some way to providing this evidence.

The development of the Trust's website is seen by all the Trustees as an essential step in the right direction in raising the profile of the research and the dissemination of key findings. The site will also include useful information on research including accessing funding and helpful links.

You may be interested in the following event: ESRC 'Economic Evaluation of Pharmacy Practice Research' event 18/19th June at the University of East Anglia, for further details:

<http://www1.uea.ac.uk/cm/home/schools/sci/cap/research/phares/esrc>

Professor Clive Smee, Trustee

Capacity building in research vital for the development of pharmacy

Sir Graham Hart, a former permanent secretary at the DH and founder chairman of the Trust when it was established in 1998, joined Peter Curphey, PPRT Trustee and Hemant Patel, President of the RPSGB to celebrate the successes of research award and bursary holders at an event held at Church House, Westminster attended by researchers and their supervisors from schools of pharmacy throughout the UK.



"It's important that we maintain and increase our research activities, for the advancement of pharmacy and for the improvement of the services which the profession provides" said Sir Graham, "Pharmacy, like any health profession, will be better practised and have better outcomes, if we understand, as fully as possible, what is going on. Progress in pharmacy is being made, slowly but surely and this is due in some part to the Trust and the Society by their support of pharmacy practice research, the students and academic institutions."

The Trust makes the annual Research Awards and Bursaries as part of its objective to increase research capacity in pharmacy. The research training bursary scheme is intended to specifically support community pharmacists who have an interest in developing their skills in conducting research relating to everyday practice.

For further information about PPRT Awards, **go to page 4...**

Commissioning in 2008/09 – Research funding available

The Trust is advertising a number of research funding opportunities - from training bursaries for junior researchers through to commissioned research for multidisciplinary teams.

For full details of all research opportunities, **go to page 4...**

Website Launch

The Trust has launched its new, dedicated and independent website – www.pprrt.org.uk Visitors to the website can gain access to all published Trust funded research, news on the latest round of commissioning briefs and newly developed research guidance.

We hope you will be able to navigate the site with ease and we would welcome any feedback you might have to further improve the facility.

What's coming out of Wales?

The Trust has funded a number of pharmacy practice researchers based in Wales. Whether it be research into communication, education or pharmacy services – Wales has got it covered. Below are three brief summaries of recently published pharmacy practice research reports coming out of Wales...

The RPSGB's new fitness to practise and disciplinary procedures: what would schools of pharmacy find useful as a resource for teaching and facilitating learning?

John, DN (JohnDN@cf.ac.uk) *et al*, Welsh School of Pharmacy, Cardiff University

A survey of academic staff at UK schools of pharmacy identified a need for a DVD/video of a fictitious disciplinary committee inquiry to help MPharm students better understand the new fitness to practise processes and procedures. In addition to this being a valuable resource for undergraduate students, interviewees also agreed that this would be useful for pre-registration graduates, and importantly as the procedures were new, for the profession as a whole. Participants offered different suggestions as to the elements of a disciplinary committee inquiry including misconduct allegations as well as criminal convictions and cautions. Interviewees explained that a DVD format would assist in students learning how a disciplinary inquiry operates. For example, dispensing errors where pharmacists have handled the situation well and badly, criminal convictions unrelated to pharmacy and failing to co-operate with an investigation were some issues. Further, there would be a need for the final video/DVD to be of high-quality, not to be too scripted and not too focused on just negative issues. The output of this study will be a transcript (rather than an actual DVD) of a fictitious inquiry based on new procedures, once the disciplinary committee has considered substantive cases under the new rules.

Investigating factors influencing user choices to visit either general practitioners or community pharmacists in the management of minor ailments - piloting a discrete choice experiment (DCE)

Hughes, D. (d.a.hughes@bangor.ac.uk) *et al* - Centre for Economics and Policy in Health, Bangor University

The use of discrete choice methodology to explore this area was demonstrated to be both feasible and successful. However, a number of methodological issues were raised by this research that merit further consideration and research. In particular,

important questions concerning how to select the attributes for inclusion within the DCE choice scenarios and improving response rates to this questionnaire based study.

A number of interesting policy implications emerged from this research. The results of the DCEs indicate that there is potential to improve the efficiency of policies aiming to increase use of community pharmacies in the management of minor illnesses. Policy makers need to reinforce the benefits of the immediate and local availability of community pharmacies that can offer brief consultations, often at less or the same cost as consulting a general practitioner to receive a prescription medicine. Users' strong preference to see a GP, coupled with the phased abolition of the prescription charge in Wales may, however, conspire against achieving these policy aims.

The role of the Welsh language in community pharmacy service provision in Wales

Hughes, L (hughesml@Cardiff.ac.uk) *et al* - Welsh School of Pharmacy, Cardiff University

The aim of this study was to investigate the role of the Welsh language in community pharmacies in Wales. In particular, the (Welsh) language abilities of pharmacy staff, the availability of Welsh-speaking staff during pharmacy opening hours and community pharmacists' perceptions and experiences of a local need for Welsh-language services.

A self-complete postal questionnaire was sent to every community pharmacy in Wales (n=715). After two follow-up mailings, a response rate of 76% was achieved. The results show that while there are high levels of Welsh-language provision in some pharmacies, this is not the case uniformly across Wales. Indeed, the levels of Welsh-speaking pharmacy staff vary widely from region to region and appear to mirror the data from the 2001 census showing levels of Welsh-speaking ability in the different areas of Wales. Promotion of the availability of pharmacy services through the medium of Welsh relied, in most cases, on local knowledge - meaning that even those Welsh-speakers who do have access to Welsh-language pharmacy services may not realise this.

The RPSGB Library – an expert resource for would-be researchers

Sarah Butler, Librarian, RPSGB discusses the resources available at the Society for pharmacy researchers...

If you are about to embark on a research project, one (or more) of the following statements may apply to you:

- I want to contribute to my profession's body of research, but I do not know what to research.
- I know what I want to research but don't know if any research already exists on this subject.
- I have an idea for some research but don't know whether it is worth pursuing.
- I know what I want to research but have forgotten all of the practical research skills learnt at university.
- I know what to research and how to go about it and now want to start with a literature search.

If any of the above applies to you, then the RPSGB Library is able to help. We can:

- Help scope a research project.
- Identify other published research in the same field.
- Provide access to print and online resources, full text journals and journal indexes.
- Provide books on the practical aspects of research.
- As knowledgeable staff, offer guidance and advice on locating information of relevance to you.

It's not necessary to visit the Library to benefit from this support. Wherever you are in the UK we can answer queries by phone and email, we can post books and documents, and you can find a lot of information online via our new online library MyLibrary (accessed via MyRPSGB).

Scoping the project - If you have an idea for a piece of research but are not quite sure about it, we can be a critical friend, listening to your idea, seeing whether similar research already exists and generally supporting you in firming up your project idea.

Other similar research - if you have defined your research topic and want to see whether anyone else has done research in this area, we can help you find out. A literature search is the first step of any research project, and searching is our specialism. We can carry out initial searches for you and send sample references.

Resources – print and online, full text and indexes - as a library we provide the resources that enable you to do your own literature searching and evidence gathering. We provide access to over 60,000 books, 250 current print journals and 1,000 full text titles online on the subjects of pharmacy, medicine and other health-related disciplines. In addition to this the journal indexes we provide enable you to determine the content of hundreds of further journals, articles from which we can send you from our own collection or from those of other libraries (for a charge).

Our portal Finding Pharmacy Information on the Internet:

<http://www.rpsgb.org/informationresources/library/fpii/> points you to many free, authoritative resources on the web.

Practical guidance - if you know what you want to research but do not know where to start, we can lend to you books about developing and carrying out a research project, or on carrying out a literature search. We even post the books to your door for free (though you are liable for the return postage).

Knowledgeable staff - if you want to carry out a literature search or use particular resources and require support in doing so, the Library staff are here to help. We can help to construct a search strategy, advise on how best to utilise particular databases or fulltext resources, or simply suggest a few resources for investigation.

For more information about what the RPSGB Library can do for you, or if you have any information-related question, call **020 7572 2300** or email library@rpsgb.org

We look forward to hearing from you!



From left to right: Sarah Butler, Nate Evarherhe, Deborah Leem, Karen Poole.

Research Commissioning 2008/2009

The Pharmacy Practice Research Trust has now announced its 2008/2009 research commissioning proposals. Two commissioning briefs and an invitation for research partnership funding have been published. These research areas build on earlier work of the Trust and on identified key research priorities over the next three years. Outline information on the calls for proposals are below:

Multi-professional Practice Grants: Supporting initiatives in public health or in the care of patients with long-term conditions

Applications are invited to undertake research in public health or long term conditions. The Trust has made a total sum of £80,000 available for small-medium projects in the following areas.

- Multi-disciplinary service development/evaluation for patients with long-term conditions.
- Multi-disciplinary service development/evaluation in public health.

The Trust is particularly interested in receiving collaborative project applications that include pharmacists working in either primary or secondary care or in the community. Priority will be given to those proposals that demonstrate innovation and provide evidence of value for money as well as patient benefit.

The closing date for submission of applications is **Friday 28th March 2008**.

Forging new collaborative partnerships with social scientists

Academic PhD supervisors are invited to submit expressions of interest for working up a collaborative application with the Trust for submission in November 2008, either for an Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) Collaborative Doctoral Award or an Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) CASE Studentship.

With an increasing clinical role and integration into mainstream healthcare the need to move from a largely science based professional model to one that incorporates elements of social science and philosophy is now required. Therefore the Trust is seeking to forge new collaborative partnerships with academia in the fields of social science.

The deadline for submission of expressions of interest for both the AHRC and ESRC schemes is **Monday 2nd June 2008**.

For further details on any of these schemes please contact the R&D team – 020 7572 2278

Professionalism in Pharmacy Practice

The Trust is inviting applications to undertake research in relation to the teaching, assessment and practice of professionalism in pharmacy.

Funding for two projects of up to £30,000 each is available to support research for either:

- Evaluation of teaching and assessment of professionalism among pharmacy undergraduates
- Professionalism in Pharmacy Practice among newly registered pharmacists (1-2 years)

The closing date for submission of applications is **Friday 28th March 2008**.

Practice Research Awards

Pharmacists who want to start or develop a research career are being invited to apply for a 2008 Practice Research Award.

The awards were set up to build research capacity in pharmacy practice and the Trust has granted 15 awards since the scheme was established. Research funded in 2007 is exploring such issues as pharmacist/patient communication, involving pharmacy students in quality assurance processes, a mental health trust pharmacist prescriber service and an oral nutritional assessment pilot study.

A total of £55,000 is available for a number of grants.

The closing date for submission of applications is **Friday 23rd May 2008**.

Research Training Bursaries

Community pharmacists who have an interest in developing their skills in conducting research relating to everyday pharmacy practice can now apply to the Research Training Bursary Scheme.

The Trust is inviting applications from community pharmacists for the 2008 scheme funded by the Leverhulme Trade Charities Trust. The Research Training Bursary Scheme has £40,000 to annually fund a number of projects over different levels and since being established in 2002 has funded ten community pharmacists to pursue research or develop an academic career.

The closing date for submission of applications is **Friday 23rd May 2008**.