



# Public health advice from community pharmacies: Views of pharmacists and the public



Janet Krska, Adam Mackridge, Kate  
Embleton, Alexandra McCaffley



# Background



- Community pharmacy contractual framework (England)
  - Promotion of healthy lifestyles
  - Opportunistic advice
  - Information leaflets
  - Signposting
- White Paper *Pharmacy in England*
  - “services and support to tackle pressing health challenges”



# Pharmacists' views



- Attach high importance to activities which improve public's health
- Most comfortable with activities relating to medicines
- Reactive rather than proactive
- Concerns about intrusiveness
- Attitudes are affected by training
- Dispensing is a barrier to greater involvement

Anderson C et al. IJPP 2003; 11: 111-120



# Pharmacy users' views



- Use of pharmacies is low for general health advice
- Pharmacists are perceived as “drug experts” not “health experts”
- Privacy and confidentiality are important issues

Anderson C et al. Health Expectations 2004;7: 191-202



# Practices of general public



- Only 12% ask for advice in community pharmacies
- Few who ask for advice do not also obtain medicine
- Advice relates to specific illnesses or symptoms, not general health

Boardman H et al. J Public Health 2005; 27: 254-262



# Research questions



- What barriers prevent the provision of public health messages from community pharmacies?
- What factors may facilitate its provision?
- Do the views of pharmacists and the general public concur?



# Methods (1)



- Ethics approval obtained from LJMU
- Two postal questionnaires devised
  - Community pharmacists
    - Confidence in providing service (4 point scale)
    - Barriers to providing public health advice
    - Factors which may encourage public to access service
  - General public
    - Use of pharmacy for public health advice
    - Factors which are important in use of service



# Methods (2)



- Questionnaire distribution
  - All 65 pharmacies in Sefton PCT received two copies of the pharmacist questionnaire
  - 280 households in Sefton (0.1% of address list) received one copy of the general public questionnaire
  - One reminder sent to non-responders after 4 weeks
- Data analysis
  - Chi-squared used to compare views of pharmacists and general public

# Results: Community pharmacists



- Responses: 45 pharmacists from 40 pharmacies (62% of all pharmacies)
- Overall confidence:

In their <b>knowledge</b>	Very confident/confident <b>38 (84%)</b>
In their <b>skills</b>	Very confident/confident <b>36 (80%)</b>
<b>Comfortable</b> with service delivery	Very comfortable/comfortable <b>35 (78%)</b>

# Perceived barriers: pharmacists



Potential barrier	Number (%) agreeing
Workload	38 (84%)
Time shortage	33 (73%)
Lack of public understanding	24 (53%)
Lack of public awareness	22 (49%)
Remuneration	20 (44%)
Campaign material	13 (29%)
Lack of pharmacist understanding	11 (24%)

# Five factors most likely to encourage uptake: pharmacists



Factor	Number (%) agreeing
Public awareness	37 (82%)
Staff knowledge	36 (80%)
Campaign material	34 (76%)
Campaign topics	32 (71%)
Proactive staff	31 (69%)



# Results: General public



- Responses: 102 (36%)
- Awareness of service: (99 responses)
  - Unsure if available 55
  - Know it is available 38
  - Not available 6
- Use of service: (94 responses)
  - Used before and would again 20
  - Not used, but would in future 20
    - **43% likely to use**
  - Used before, but would not again 1
  - Not used and not likely to 53
    - **57% not likely to use**



# Five factors most likely to encourage uptake : public



Factor	Number (%) agreeing
Staff knowledge	92 (97%)
Advice easy to understand	90 (93%)
Staff availability	80 (86%)
Staff friendliness	82 (85%)
Confidentiality	82 (85%)



# Few views were similar



<b>Encouraging factors</b>	<b>Pharmacists</b>	<b>Public</b>
Staff knowledge	36 (80%)	92 (97%)
Choice of campaign topics	32 (71%)	76 (83%)

**P>0.05 for both factors (Chi-squared)**

# More views differed!



<b>Encouraging factors</b>	<b>Pharmacists</b>	<b>Public</b>
Confidentiality	16 (36%)	82 (85%)
Private area	11 (24%)	72 (77%)
Pharmacy opening times	4 (9%)	74 (80%)
Pharmacy location	4 (9%)	73 (75%)
Staff availability	24 (53%)	80 (86%)

**P<0.001 for each factor (Chi-squared)**



# Some key messages



- Pharmacists believed that public awareness of services was the most important factor
- Therefore proactive staff are also needed
- 69% (31) felt only some people want this service
- Campaign material can be a barrier or encourage use
- But only 50% (51) of the public considered advertising to be important
- True: more than half would not use the service
- Advice must be easy to understand
- The amount of time involved in providing the advice was important to 71% (72)



# Conclusions



- *Many people do not want to access pharmacists for advice on general health*
- *The profession needs to promote the availability of public health services available from community pharmacies more widely*
- *Such promotion should emphasise the convenience, privacy and confidentiality of services*
- *Staff characteristics are very important: knowledge, friendliness and being pro-active*
- *Time is an issue for both pharmacists and the public*