

FINAL PROJECT REPORT

Date: 16 October 2014

Name:

Lee Thompson

Project Title:

Role evolution and community pharmacy in Christchurch: Perceptions of pharmacists, GPs and pharmacy users

Please copy the "Specific Objective(s)" statement, entered on your application form, in the space below.

This project will provide in-depth analysis of the issues surrounding the evolution of the role of community pharmacy from provider, GP and user perspectives. Role evolution may involve for example, colocation with other health practitioners within emerging integrated health centres, the uptake of pharmacist prescribing, medicines use reviews and various forms of chronic disease monitoring. Gaining a deeper understanding of these perspectives will contribute to the identification of barriers and facilitating factors in working towards the goal of greater integration and collaboration between community pharmacy, the wider primary health care team and service users. Using qualitative methods, this research will investigate three key groups with potentially different ways of approaching and responding to the changing role of community pharmacy. These groups are: community pharmacists (an initial focus group of approximately five participants, followed by in-depth interviews with approximately 20 individual pharmacists), GPs (five - eight focus groups – approximately 25 participants in total) and service users (five focus groups with approximately five participants in each group – approximately 25 participants in total). The three groups will be focused on sequentially.

Briefly describe how successful you were in achieving the stated objective(s). If the objective(s) was not achieved, explain why that is the case and describe what you did manage to achieve.

The project successfully recruited sufficient numbers to achieve data saturation from all groups.

In-depth analysis of the resulting data revealed significant insights into the barriers and facilitators to role extension, expansion and thence integration and collaboration. From this perspective the project has been successful.

Briefly describe any interesting outcomes which might not have been considered in your original objectives (if any).

Because the approach was exploratory, we had a relatively open brief due to our research design.

There are several key areas that stand out however. While it was anticipated that trust would be significant, I did not realise quite how significant it would appear to be. Trust was a key concept both between pharmacists and GPs and between pharmacists and members of the public. Trust is of course complex and takes time to establish. It is not something that can be delivered ready-made, but must be built from the ground up. It can't be hurried. The significance of this finding raised the issue of whether there is a need for investigation of the

concept of interprofessional collaboration and collaborative working very early in the training of doctors and pharmacists

It was anticipated that GPs may be suspicious of the professionalism of pharmacists due to their willingness to stock products that doctors may not condone. I was unprepared for the ways that most of our pharmacist participants explicitly distanced themselves from those aspects of their work environments and firmly expressed boundaries around their professional roles. This boundary-marking was significant for how they understood role expansion and extension. These findings have been analysed in some depth.

One final area that was more significant than anticipated was the complexity of space within the pharmacy and what demands might be placed on this via role expansion and extension. As well as this, space, privacy and confidentiality were discussed in very complex ways by members of the public. Again, we have investigated this issue in some depth.

Outcomes

There are three publications pending, one in a local journal and two in international journals.

We (myself and the research assistant recruited to work on this grant) have been actively working with the Community Pharmacy Group from Pegasus Health as a result of the work on the CMRF grant. We have recently been approached by staff members in clinical pharmacology regarding work on the provision of patient information about medicines.