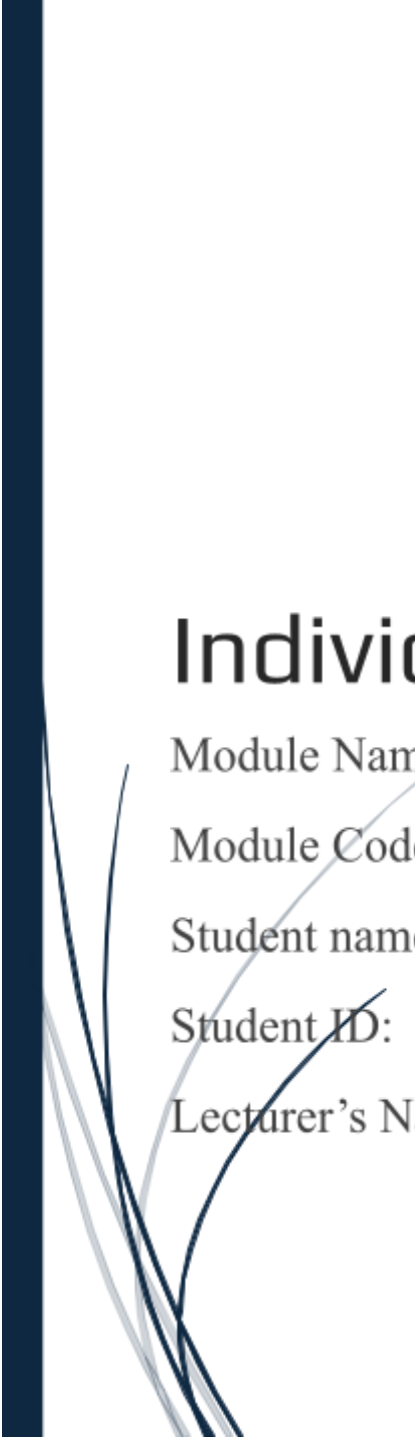




Individual Report

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Research Topic: The Evolving Role of Community Pharmacy in the UK

Introduction

The Pharmaceutical community in the UK has involved a lot in the last 20 years, specifically in the areas such as healthcare, no longer restricting itself only focused on dispensing medicines, they are now recognised as an integral part of the primary health care system. Providing a wide range of clinical, advisory, and public health services. Several policy reforms, workforce changes and pressures on the NHS have accelerated this shift.

Community pharmacy is taking on a wider patient facing role in the NHS and the Delivering Plan for recovering Access to Primary Care set out how this could be developed through the expansion of clinical services delivered through pharmacies to patients and communities.

Community pharmacy is a critical part of primary care in England, but its role and relationship to the wider NHS is often poorly understood. The explainer looks at the community pharmacy sector in England, explaining how pharmacies are contracted and funded, the types of services they provide and future trends in the sector. The report investigates the evolving roles of community pharmacy in the UK, exploring why research methods can be applied. The expansion of community pharmacy services, including the community Pharmacist consultation service, has positioned pharmacies as a crucial part of front line healthcare delivery. Understanding how and why these changes are occurring is important for evaluating their effectiveness and identifying future improvement areas.

Problem Statement

A major issue in the UK health and social care sector is the growing pressure on primary care services, particularly general practitioners (GPs). GP appointments are increasingly difficult for patients to access due to rising demand, long term condition management, and staff shortages. This has contributed to delays, increased patient dissatisfaction, and further strain on urgent care services as a result, policymakers have increasingly turned to community pharmacies to take on more clinical responsibilities in order to alleviate these pressures and provide accessible healthcare.

Pharmacists need a mix of technical, clinical, communication and management skills to perform effectively in this role. Clinical and technical skills, Pharmacology Knowledge, it's important understanding how drugs work, their side effects, and interaction. Prescription Analysis. Ensuring prescriptions are safe and appropriate.

Community pharmacy, often referred to as retail pharmacy, constitutes one of the four foundational components of the primary care system in England, alongside

general practice, optical services, and dentistry. While it is perhaps best recognized for dispensing and selling medications, its role is actually much more expansive, encompassing a variety of NHS and publicly funded services. Community pharmacies are commonly found on many high streets and are frequently present in large supermarkets as well.

Chosen Research topic;

The topic chosen for this research is “The evolving role of community pharmacy in the UK” This topic focused on how community pharmacy practice has changed over time and how pharmacists contribute to modern healthcare delivery. It includes the shift toward services such as prescribing. Vaccinations public health interventions, and clinical consultations

Justification

community pharmacy is important for several reasons;

Healthcare for the need for this research investigating the evolving role of community pharmacy is important for several reasons:

Health Care System pressures; The NHS faces considerable pressure due to increased demand and limited resources. Community pharmacy can help reduce the pressure on GPs and hospitals. Policy changes; Recent government decisions, such as the NHS Community Pharmacy Consultation Service (CPCS) and plans for all newly qualified pharmacists to become independent prescribers, mark significant transformations that require evaluation.

Improved Public Health; Pharmacies play a crucial role in managing chronic diseases, vaccination, and self-care.

Access and equity for patients; Pharmacies support people who have difficulty accessing medical appointments, thus improving health equity.

Professional Development; Understanding these changes helps pharmacists prepare for the expansion of their responsibilities.

Studying this topic allows the healthcare sector to identify gaps, ensure the effective implementation of new services, and improve patient outcomes

Information Sources and Justification

NHS England (2019) The Community pharmacy Contractual Framework

(CPCF) Description; When I read the CPC, I see that the CPC lists the roles, responsibilities and funded services for community pharmacies in England. The CPC includes service, advanced services and locally commissioned services. The CPC explains services such as the CPCS. The CPC shows term plans for clinical integration.

Why I chose this source: the NHS produces the policy document, The NHS uses the policy document to set official expectations for pharmacies and the primary policy document helps people understand those expectations. The primary policy document gives up to date information about how pharmacy roles are expanding and why pharmacy roles expand. NHS England releases the policy document directly so the information in the primary policy document is credible and reflects national healthcare priorities.

Royal Pharmaceutical Society (RPS) The Future of Pharmacy” (2018)

Description; Pharmacists roles are changing. I read the body publication. The professional body publication lists services, medicines optimization and public health responsibilities. The professional body publication also says that workforce development professionals are needed. Why this source was chosen; I think the RPS is the organization that represents pharmacists in the UK. RPS reports give insight into pharmacy practice and future directions. The source is relevant because the source evaluates practice. The source also provides recommendations, for policy and professional development.

Peer Reviewed Journal Article- Smith &Patel (2019). British Journal of Pharmacy

Description; I read this article that examines the expanding clinical responsibilities of community pharmacists now handling illness management. The academic article also describes the medicines optimization services that community pharmacists provide.

Why this source was chosen; Peer reviewed journals provide evidence-based research and unbiased analysis. This article supports the academic credibility of the report by presenting independent research findings. It helps bridge gaps between policy intentions and real-world practice, making it essential for balanced research understanding.

Task 2: Research Methodologies

Give a brief overview of quantitative and qualitative research.

Quantitative Research; looks at the numbers, the statistics and the data that can be measured. Quantitative research helps me identify patterns, measure outcomes and draw conclusions from the evidence. I also do an analysis of service usage for example the number of CPCS referrals and I do statistical evaluation of patient satisfaction. Quantitative research works well for studies and for comparing outcomes across different settings.

Qualitative research focuses on understanding the experiences, the opinions and the behaviors. I see that qualitative research uses interviews, focus groups and thematic analysis. I notice that qualitative research does not use numbers. The data are words and descriptions. I think that qualitative research helps explore how patients and healthcare professionals feel about the barriers to service implementation and personal. Experiences. Both methods can complement each other, and many studies use mixed methods.

Both methods can be complementary, and numerous studies employ a mixed methods approach.

What type of research methodology will you use for your research and why?

For investigating the evolving role of community pharmacy in the UK, qualitative research is the most suitable methodology. This choice is driven by the research's aim to delve into experiences, perceived challenging role of pharmacists, rather than focusing on quantifiable outcomes. Qualitative approaches, analyzing policy documents, enable the researchers to examine how these changes have influenced practice, how pharmacists perceive their expanding roles, and the challenges they encounter. These insights offer a deeper understanding that cannot be achieved through quantitative data alone.

Task 3: Data Collection

Overview of primary and secondary data collection

Primary data means the data collected directly obtained from surveys, interviews, observations, audits and trials to get data. In secondary data means data that other people have already collected and that reuse. NHS prescriptions and dispensing datasets, GP records, service level activity data for community pharmacy research where roles are rapidly expanding. Design combining both is usually best, quantitative secondary data to show systems level patterns and primary qualitative data to explain why and how.

What form of data will be used to address your research problem, and why?

This report used the secondary data, that will be obtained from existing NHS and professional sources, such as NHS England reports, NHS Business Services Authority datasets, and publications from community pharmacy England. These sources provide large scale, reliable quantitative data on services activity. Secondary data validate and contextualise primary findings and demonstrate how local experiences fit within national trends. If used both quantitative and qualitative data strengthens the research by improving validity, depth and credibility, making it well suited to examining how and why community pharmacy role are evolving in the UK.

Conclusion

The role of community pharmacy in the UK continues to evolve from a traditional dispensing focused service to a front-line clinical profession. The shift includes. Greater clinical responsibility, expanded prescribing right, stronger integration into primary care. Increased public health involvement. Digital transformation. These developments position community pharmacies as essential components of a modern, accessible, and efficient NHS.

The evolving role of community pharmacy in the United Kingdom is changing fast. I have seen the shift in community pharmacy in my work. The changing role of community pharmacy matters because the NHS faces pressure and people need health care that is close and focused on the patient..

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