Clinical pharmacists in general practice – patient-facing roles

Survey method

CPPE education supervisors were asked to make a subjective judgement about several measures of the patient-facing nature of the clinical pharmacist’s role for pharmacists in the GP clinical pharmacist scheme. The survey was completed in March/April 2017. This is 12 months after the commencement of the general practice clinical pharmacist scheme and immediately after the last phase 1 education induction.

National survey results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>North</th>
<th>South</th>
<th>London &amp; SE</th>
<th>Midlands</th>
<th>National total</th>
<th>National percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total number of pharmacists surveyed</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>435</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of pharmacists doing at least one patient-facing clinic per week</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>365</td>
<td>84 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of pharmacists doing 50 percent or more patient-facing work</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>239</td>
<td>55 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of pharmacists doing medication review clinics</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>311</td>
<td>71 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pharmacists who are not patient facing</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>16 percent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results were recorded for 95 percent of phase 1 pharmacists.

Discussion

There are many influences on the patient-facing role including workplace influences, pharmacists’ personal preferences, prescribing status and recruitment issues.

The following were found to influence the patient facing role:

- Recently started in post
- Inexperienced pharmacist in struggling practice
- Foundation practice pharmacists – lacking clinical experience
- Part-time working
- No apparent reason/explanation
- Performance management issues
- Reluctance by senior or practice to support patient-facing role if pharmacists are not prescribers
- Movement within the scheme (practices and pharmacists)
- Practice engagement due to employment model (neighbourhood working rather than embedded in practices)
- Communication issues
- Workload – time spent dealing with discharges and medication queries and limited time for patient-facing activity
- Expectations about the role (practices and pharmacists not realising this is a patient-facing role)
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Action taken

CPPE has delivered a series of webinars in April and May 2017 to support moving to a more patient-facing role. These have been developed in collaboration with the Leadership Academy and include GP input.

Locally, Primary Care Commissioning and CPPE education teams are supporting change with pharmacists, GPs and practice managers in practices and bid sites. For example:

- addressing practice engagement due to employment model (neighbourhood working rather than embedded in practices), the model is being changed to an embedded model
- pharmacists have changed rotas to allow a more patient-facing role
- pharmacists completing independent prescribing courses and gaining clinical experience.