

Engagement of community pharmacies in a multi-centre education-focused intervention

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INTRODUCTION

Under the Fifth Community Pharmacy Agreement, research was commissioned to enhance capacity in community pharmacy to identify and manage consumers with varying levels of health literacy. We report our experiences with engaging the participating pharmacies in a unique project design.

METHODS

Informed by educational literature, our research comprised an education-focused intervention delivered to participating pharmacies via face-to-face or electronic training. A control group received no intervention. One or two key staff members from each intervention pharmacy participated in a 'train-the-trainer' approach, and were allowed flexibility in training their remaining staff. The modules were designed for comprehensibility by all staff, and included interactive and reflective elements. A target of 528 consumers, from 90 pharmacies across three states, was statistically determined. Recruitment strategies to engage rural and metropolitan pharmacies included advertisements and contact with all pharmacies in identified regions.

RESULTS

77 pharmacies expressed interest in participating; 14 withdrew for logistical reasons. 23, 17 and 23 pharmacies completed face-to-face, electronic, and no training, respectively. The 'trained trainers' and 'trainees' were eligible to claim continuing professional development. Greater engagement with the project was noted with face-to-face delivery, although electronic delivery offered accessibility. In-pharmacy training varied from inclusion of modules in staff meetings to intensive block sessions.

DISCUSSION

Engaging community pharmacy staff in an educational intervention underpinned by research presented challenges similar to other intervention projects. Incentivising staff to undergo training and train other staff was deemed successful, and offers a mechanism for nationwide skills development.

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