Integrating a Pharmacist into the General Practice Setting: Opinions of Pharmacists, General Practitioners, Health Care Consumers, and Practice Managers

Christopher FREEMAN(1,2), Lisa NISSEN(1), Greg KYLE(3), Ian WILLIAMS(1,5), W Neil COTTRELL(3)
(1) University of Queensland, Brisbane. QLD (2) Calm Hill Healthcare, Brisbane. Qld (3) University of Canberra, Canberra, ACT

OBJECTIVE
To describe the opinions of local stakeholders in South-East Queensland on the integration of a pharmacist into the Australian General Practice setting.

METHODS
- Focus groups or semi-structured interviews were conducted with GPs, health care consumers, pharmacists and practice managers.
- Leximancer was used to identify the frequency of concepts (words) and concept co-occurrence within the interviews.
- Concepts were divided into themes (such as positively viewed roles) and further subdivided into their respective interviewee group.

RESULTS
58 participants took part in 5 focus groups and 18 semi-structured interviews.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positively viewed roles</th>
<th>General Practitioners</th>
<th>Pharmacists</th>
<th>Health Care Consumers</th>
<th>Practice Managers</th>
<th>Mixed Pharmacist and GP Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Medication review</td>
<td>Medication review</td>
<td>Medication information / counselling</td>
<td>Medication review</td>
<td>Medication Information</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medication information</td>
<td>Medication reconciliation / history taking</td>
<td>Prescribing (script renewal)</td>
<td>Medication counselling</td>
<td>Medication review</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education to patients</td>
<td>Education (GPs and Patients)</td>
<td>Medication review</td>
<td>Education and Drug Information</td>
<td>Patient education / Patient medication profile print outs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality prescribing initiatives</td>
<td>Prescribing</td>
<td>Medication profile print outs</td>
<td>Medication Reconciliation</td>
<td>Repeat prescribing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education to GPs</td>
<td>Specialty clinics</td>
<td>Patient advocate to GP</td>
<td>Repeat prescribing</td>
<td>Cost savings on medications</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DISCUSSION
- Participants identified common potential roles for a “practice pharmacist”.
- Common enablers to pharmacist integration included additional training for the pharmacist and promotion of the services.
- Common barriers to pharmacist integration included medical culture and logistical issues such as available space.
- Further, lack of remuneration was seen as a barrier however having funding available was seen as an enabler.

CONCLUSION
These results highlight support for the extended role of a pharmacist within the General Practice setting. They can be used to inform debate on this topic, potentially leading to the development of a new model of integrated primary care involving pharmacist practitioners.