

Creating a Pharmacy Research Community of Practice

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Background

Research is a key pillar of pharmacy professional practice, improving the delivery of pharmacy services and supporting evidence-based practice (1,2). Despite this, only a minority of the UK pharmacy workforce is research-active (1).

Previous work with pharmacists in Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board (CTMUHB) identified barriers and facilitators spanning the capability, opportunity and motivation to engage in research. Barriers identified included a perceived lack of support network, and facilitators included the availability of role models. These findings were reflected in the wider literature, where pharmacists reported needing more time, skills and confidence to engage in research (2,3).

Aims and objectives

To increase the confidence and competence of the Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board (CTMUHB) pharmacy workforce to engage in research by providing a forum for open discussion and peer support for research activities through a Pharmacy Research Community of Practice (PRCoP).

1. Identify future activities to support research within CTMUHB that could be operationalised through PRCoP.
2. Provide networking opportunities through an in-person PRCoP launch event open to pharmacists and pharmacy technicians in CTMUHB.
3. Model research in practice by showcasing research, service evaluation or quality improvement projects.
4. Signpost to research support resources, including facilities and online training resources available within CTMUHB.



Methods

A PRCoP launch event was organised, with content informed by the barriers and facilitators previously identified. Key figures in CTMUHB were invited to speak. To facilitate networking, researchers from Cardiff Metropolitan University were invited and seated with pharmacists with similar research interests. CTMUHB pharmacists also showcased their research.

A follow-up 'Journal Club' event was held, where attendees met to critically appraise a journal article, providing topic-focused learning and discussion.

Outcomes

Thirty-nine people attended the PRCoP launch event. Participants valued learning about research support within CTMUHB and networking with peers and academic researchers.

Eleven pharmacists and one technician attended the Journal Club. This provided learning and networking opportunities, enhancing peer support for research in CTMUHB.

'...opportunity to see people in 'real life' and understand the support that is available.'

Conclusions

The Pharmacy Research Community of Practice was established in response to identified barriers and facilitators to research engagement within the CTMUHB pharmacy workforce, showing positive initial engagement. Next steps are to consolidate and build on the research peer support network within CTMUHB.