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## RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE 2025

### POSTER PRESENTATION 33:

An exploration of the facilitators and barriers to primary care pharmacists providing mental health care during medication reviews

**Author/s:** Bowen, A., Hodson, K.

**Department:** Pharmacy, Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board. School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences, Cardiff University.

#### **Introduction:**

The prevalence of mental health conditions has increased, with many patients presenting to primary care. Primary care pharmacists routinely review patients with chronic conditions and advise on medication-related issues. (1) However, studies highlight the need for better integration of pharmacists into mental health teams and enhanced training to better utilise the profession. (2-5)

#### **Aim:**

The aim was to explore the facilitators and barriers to primary care pharmacists providing mental health care during medication reviews. Objectives included identifying challenges and enablers, factors influencing pharmacists' confidence, and required resources.

#### **Methodology:**

A qualitative study was conducted, utilising face-to-face or virtual semi-structured interviews with pharmacists experienced in primary care medication reviews (including cluster pharmacists and prescribing advisors). Twenty-seven pharmacists were invited: thirteen participated. Data was analysed inductively to identify themes. Ethical approval was obtained from Cardiff University's School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences Committee and CTMUB's Research and Development department.

#### **Results:**

Three themes emerged: (1) competence in conducting mental health care during medication reviews; (2) primary care infrastructure; and (3) community of practice. Participants reported a disparity between theoretical knowledge and applied confidence, often adopting an advisory role. Suggested improvements included targeted training (pharmacological, e.g., cross-tapering antidepressants; non-pharmacological, e.g., motivational interviewing), improved awareness of local resources, enhanced communication with specialist services, and formalised peer support. The emotional burden of managing complex, sensitive cases was also noted. Structural recommendations included clarifying pharmacist expectations within cluster roles, allocating more time for complex reviews, and developing structured mental health resources for both patients and pharmacists.

#### **Conclusion:**

Enhancing pharmacists' ability to provide effective mental health care requires a combination of targeted training, accessible resources, and robust peer support. Clearer role definitions and stronger integration across sectors could reduce emotional strain, minimise role ambiguity, and optimise pharmacists' contribution to mental health service delivery.

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