

20 years of Pharmacy Technicians in MI – lessons learnt and next steps

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20 Years
1998 - 2018

Introduction

The Accredited Medicines Information Technician Training Scheme (AMITTS) was established nearly 20 years ago. The scheme has developed over this time – some key positive developments are:

- Introductory training for the pharmacy technicians is currently provided jointly with pharmacists on the National Training course.
- Member of the public/patient helpline enquiries have been included in the scheme.
- The re-accreditation process has been moved to a local, rather than a central one, with the pharmacy technicians being responsible for initiating the process.
- Funding by UKMi for an electronic portfolio. This is under construction and will be in use for the next cohort starting in October 2018.



Method

In order to identify further development needs the AMITTS Board of Management (BoM)/UKMi Workforce Development Group sent a survey (Survey Monkey) to all MI Centres, known accredited pharmacy technicians and mentors in June 2018. The survey asked questions about scope of practice, development and funding.

Results – responses were received from 29 Pharmacy Technicians and 68 Pharmacists. The results will be used to direct the development of the UKMi AMITTS.

Over 65% of pharmacy technicians had worked in MI for more than 5 years

Over 70% of pharmacy technicians were involved with non-MI activities – most commonly a) dispensary, medicines management and ACT, b) formulary, D&T and Medicines Optimisation and c) E&T (90% of respondents)

Availability, stability, formulation, interactions and adverse drug reactions are the most commonly accredited enquiry categories

80% of pharmacy technicians had not added enquiry categories after their original accreditation, although 40% were planning to do so

Learning and development needs identified by the pharmacy technicians included clinical knowledge, updates on drugs and resources and training and mentoring skills

Nearly half of pharmacy technicians check the enquiries of other members of staff

The majority of pharmacy technicians and pharmacists did not want to see further enquiry types added to the accreditation scheme. For those that did - pregnancy, breast feeding and syringe driver compatibility were suggested by both groups

Pharmacists reported a number of advantages of having a pharmacy technician in MI including – continuity of MI service provision, their knowledge of processes and practices in Pharmacy and the wider organisation, training others and involvement in patient helpline

Potential disadvantages of having a pharmacy technician in MI were time to train, lack of clinical knowledge, supervision required and potential to deskill rotational pharmacists

Pharmacists also reported barriers to recruiting pharmacy technicians in MI as lack of funding, lack of managerial support and lack of suitable candidates

Over 50% of pharmacy technicians and 65% of pharmacists thought there was a need for a re-accreditation process but there was less consistency on how the process should be undertaken. Suggestions included peer review, CPD, GPhC revalidation and the current system

Discussion

There is a high degree of job satisfaction amongst pharmacy technicians in MI. Also the time spent providing initial training to pharmacy technicians in MI is a good investment given the length of time they will remain in post

Pharmacy technicians in MI are flexible and have transferable skills. The significant involvement of pharmacy technicians in providing training in MI releases pharmacists from this activity

See figure 1: What enquiry types are you accredited for?

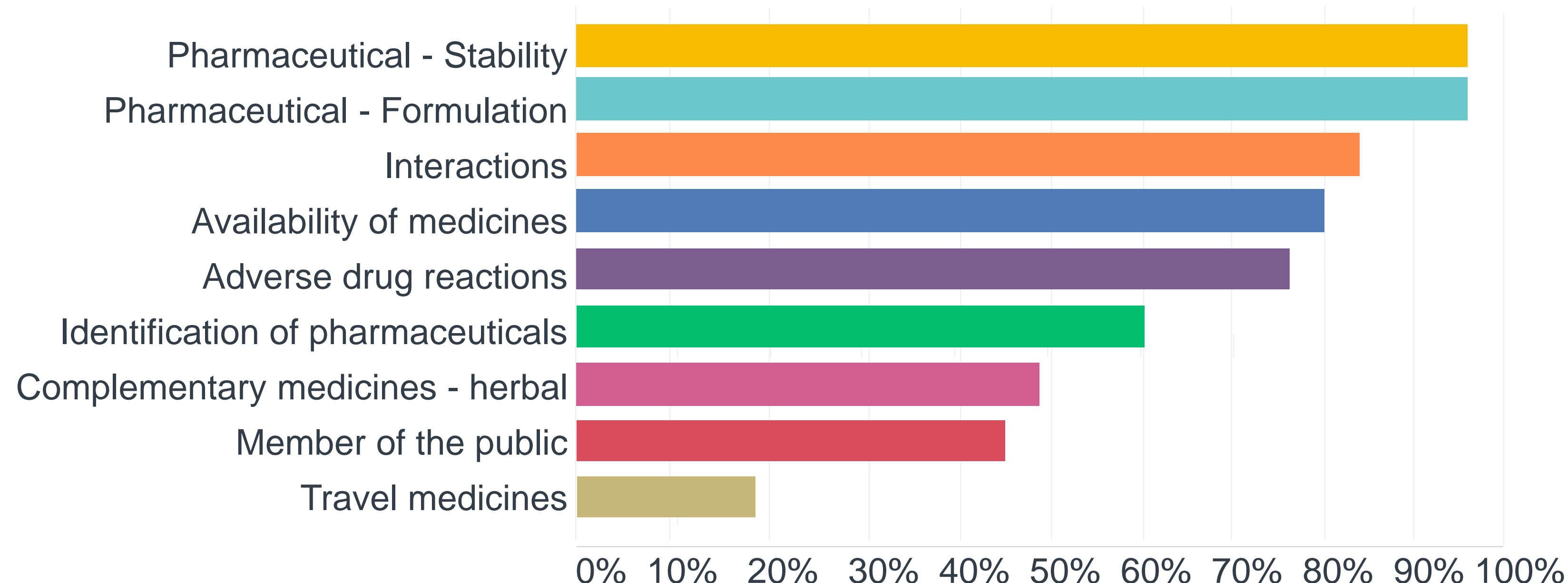
Discussion of potential additional enquiry categories should be included in the pharmacy technician's annual review process. However many respondents said that they were already accredited for the enquiry types that their MI centres handled

The AMITTS BoM will consider how best to meet these L&D needs

This releases pharmacists from this activity

The BoM will consider including further enquiry categories in the scheme and the potential for development of an advanced scheme for experienced pharmacy technicians

Figure 1: Which enquiry types are you accredited for?



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