

# Impact of the Medicines Learning Portal 2019

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## Introduction

The Medicines Learning Portal was launched in 2016 with the aim of helping hospital pre-registration and foundation pharmacists develop their clinical decision-making skills. A 2017 survey found that the site was widely used across the UK, and it helped pre-registration and foundation pharmacists make decisions about medicines.<sup>1</sup> Since then the site has continued to develop – new content has been added, and the existing content has been extensively updated. In 2018 the site won the HSJ Value in Training and Development award and in 2019, the number of visits reached 500,000. The aim of this study was to assess the impact of the Medicines Learning Portal as an educational tool, to explore users' priorities for the content of the site and to establish how best to promote the site to its target audience. The specific objectives were to:

- Assess awareness of the Medicines Learning Portal and describe the current user profile.
- Measure the impact of the site on the clinical decision-making skills of learners, and upon the care they give to patients.
- Assess whether the site saves tutor time.
- Assess the relative importance of the current content, and prioritise future content.
- Explore methods of promoting the Medicines Learning Portal.

## Method

Survey of learners and tutors using an electronic questionnaire distributed through NHS pharmacy networks over 6 weeks during Spring 2019. The questionnaire was also available on the Medicines Learning Portal home page.

## Results

227 responses were received over the study period. Not all respondents answered all questions. Pre-registration and junior pharmacists were the most well represented group (n=73, 32.2%) followed by clinical pharmacists (n=72, 31.7%). Of those that answered the question, 81% (n=178) had used the site, either as a learner (n=90, 40.7%), or a tutor (n=88, 39.8%).

### Awareness & Promotion

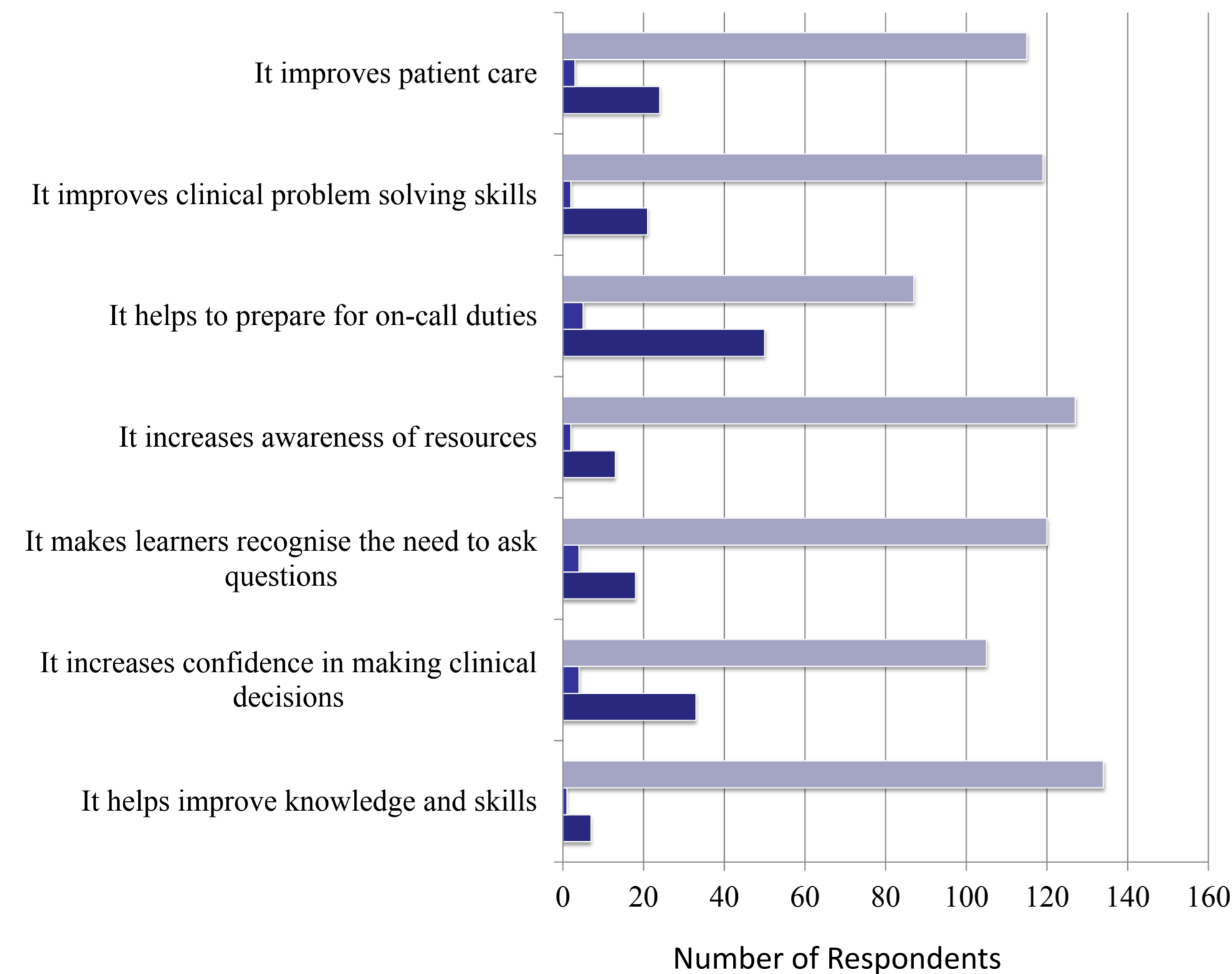
Of the 19.5% (n=43) of respondents who hadn't used the site, 76.7% (n=33) indicated that this was due to lack of awareness. Most tutors had heard about the site through a colleague (n=39, 47.0%) followed by through a national training package or website (n=24, 28.9%). Most learners were made aware of the site by their tutor or manager (n=55, 67.9%). Many helpful suggestions for promotion of the site were made.

### Content

Both learners (n=58, 79.5%) and tutors (n=61, 83.6%) judged the Drug Interactions tutorial as the most important to practice. This was also the case in the 2017 survey. Since 2017, new content concerning antibiotics, inherited disorders, research, and on-call training have been added to the site and positive feedback was received. There were helpful suggestions and common themes in terms of ideas for future material and these will be prioritised for future development.

### Use in Practice

Learners use the Medicines Learning Portal mainly during their Medicines Information rotation (n=68, 86.1%) but also during personal study time (n=35, 44.3%), during their clinical pharmacy rotation (n=18, 22.8%) and when faced with a clinical problem (n=18, 22.8%). Tutors/managers tend to give guidance as to which topics learners complete (n=47, 59.5%) but learners seem to use the site independently, with the majority stating that their answers to the learning exercises were not reviewed by their tutor (n=61, 77.2%).



## Does the site save teaching time?



### Impact

85.7% (n=60) of tutors thought the site improved the clinical problem solving skills of pre-registration and foundation pharmacists; 81.9% (n=59) of learners agreed. More than three quarters of tutors (n=56, 80.0%) and learners (n=59, 81.9%) said the site improved the care given to patients by pre-registration and foundation pharmacists. Most tutors and managers thought the site saved teaching time (n=53, 75.7%), with 21% (n=15) estimating it saved them >4 hours each week. On a 6-point Likert scale where 1 was poor and 6 was excellent, 72.2% (n=52) of learners and 88.6% (n=62) of tutors awarded the site a 5 or 6.

**“Reliable, well-researched information that I can trust”**

## Discussion

The Medicines Learning Portal helps pre-registration and foundation pharmacists care for patients. It helps them to apply their knowledge and skills with confidence to make clinical decisions about medicines. The site saves tutors time and is rated highly. The future development of the site, including the content and promotional methods, will be guided by the results of this study.

Reference 1. Badiani A, Wills S. Impact of the Medicines Learning Portal. Poster presented at UKMi PDS 2017.

**“It's free and yet is a quality training tool”**