

Authors:

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Introduction

'Practice Based Pharmacists in General Practice' is an enhanced service provided by GP Federations in Northern Ireland.

The role of the Practice Based Pharmacist is:

- To improve safety and reduce level of errors and waste by managing prescribing systems and carrying out medication reviews, and medicines reconciliation, associated with patient discharge
- To release GP time spent on prescribing activities to increase overall GP capacity and improve patient outcomes
- To improve prescribing quality through implementation of the Northern Ireland Formulary
- To ensure consistency of prescribing
- To reduce prescribing costs

The practice based pharmacists invited RMPIS to participate in Project ECHO, a 'hub and spoke' training model involving video conferencing technology that allows shared learning in practice. The hub is the multidisciplinary group for a specific clinical area and usually consists of a network lead and facilitator, alongside experts in the particular subject of the ECHO session, who deliver the teaching presentation and provide suggestions and expert opinion to the spokes. A spoke can be any one person or a group of people who generally participate in an ECHO session from their own location via video link to the hub using any device with broadband and microphone-speaker capability. The spokes are those who are being educated and supported via Project ECHO. The spokes are responsible for delivering case presentations which will offer discussion and opinions of best practice from peers and hub experts.

The advantages of this model are that it facilitates:

- Sharing of relevant specialist topics
- Discussion of case studies which allows pharmacists to learn from experienced peers
- Training of a wide geographical spread of pharmacists
- Delivery of training with minimal time input from the experts

Specialist pharmacy topics presented via Project ECHO include palliative care cardiology and medicines information.

The Annual Report for RMPIS over the years 2015-2017 revealed an increase in calls from practice pharmacists (2015 = 40, 2016 = 131, 2017 = 357). Almost half of these calls were categorised as level 1 enquiries. As such, these enquiries could potentially be answered using open access resources. The use of these resources was identified as a learning need for the practice based pharmacists.

Method

A presentation was developed for the practice pharmacists based on the identified learning need, focusing on open access resources. This presentation was delivered twice via Project ECHO, once for each new wave of recruited practice based pharmacists (2017-2018). After each presentation, practice based pharmacists had an opportunity to discuss case studies where they had used open access resources to answer queries themselves with the RMPIS pharmacist, and to obtain advice and feedback. A recording of the presentation was also made available afterwards, via the Project ECHO Moodle website. Feedback from the practice based pharmacists in attendance was sought after each presentation using SurveyMonkey®.

Chart 1: Was the presentation easy to follow?
Total = 26

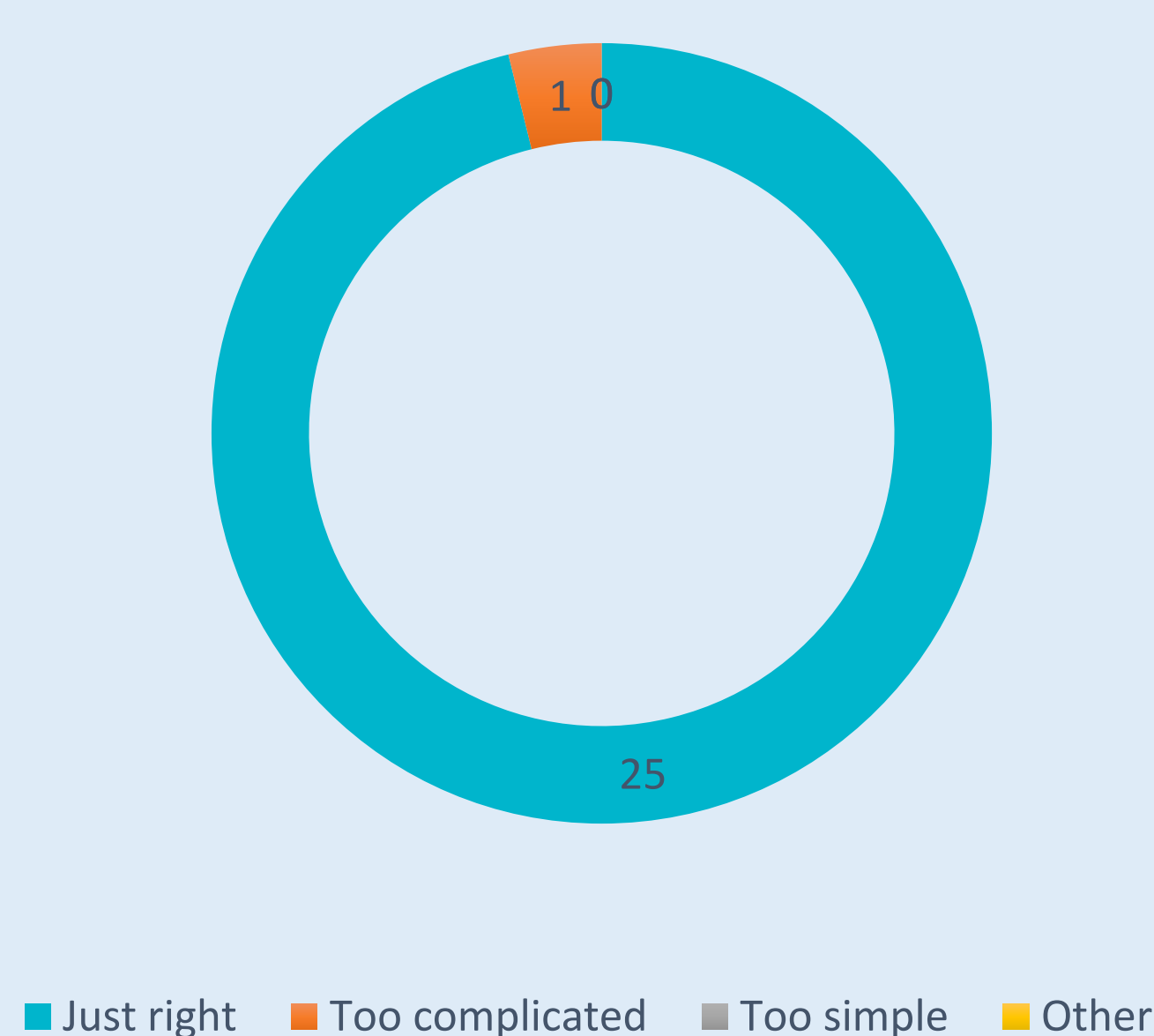


Chart 2: Do you feel your knowledge of the resources has:
Total = 26

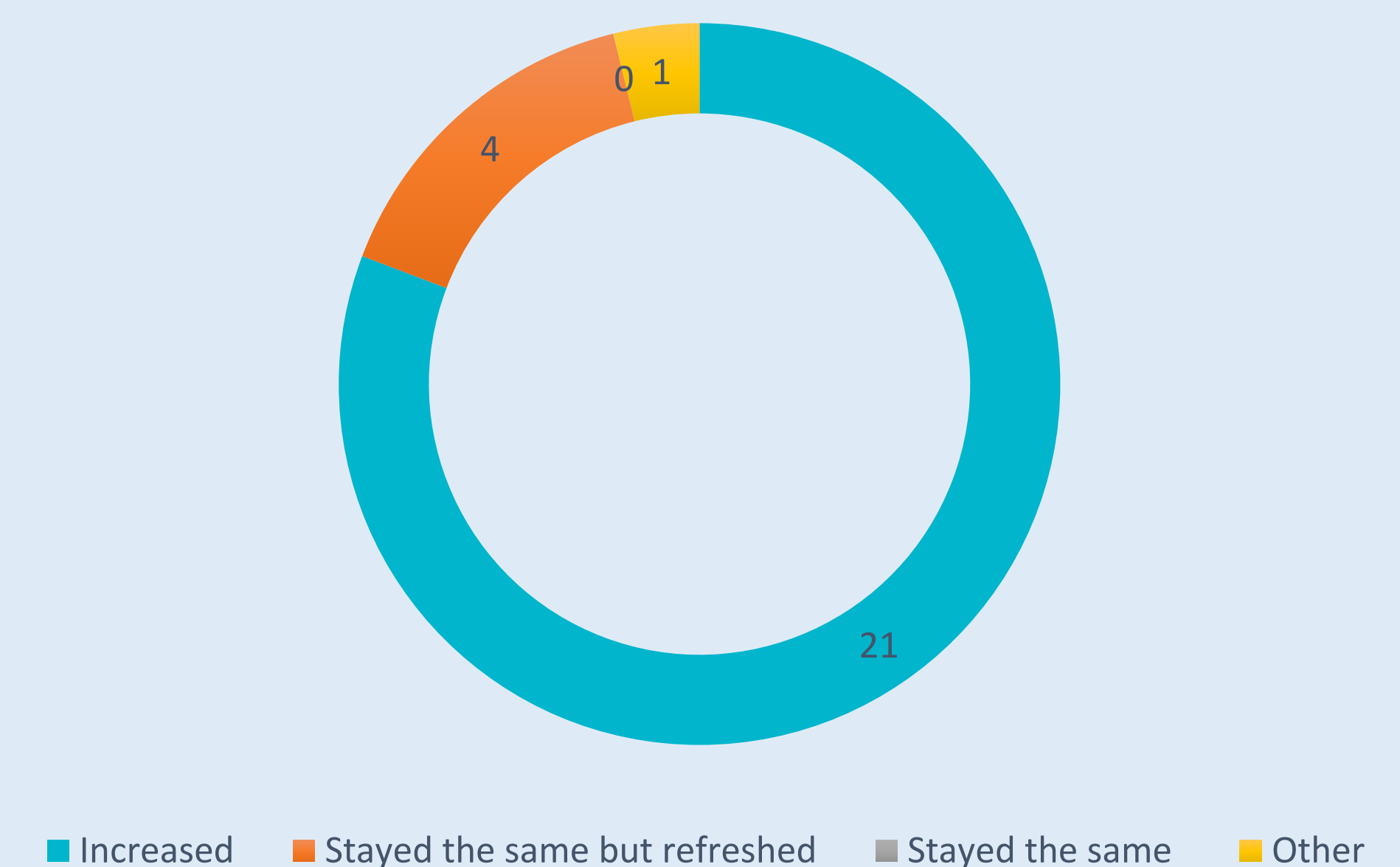
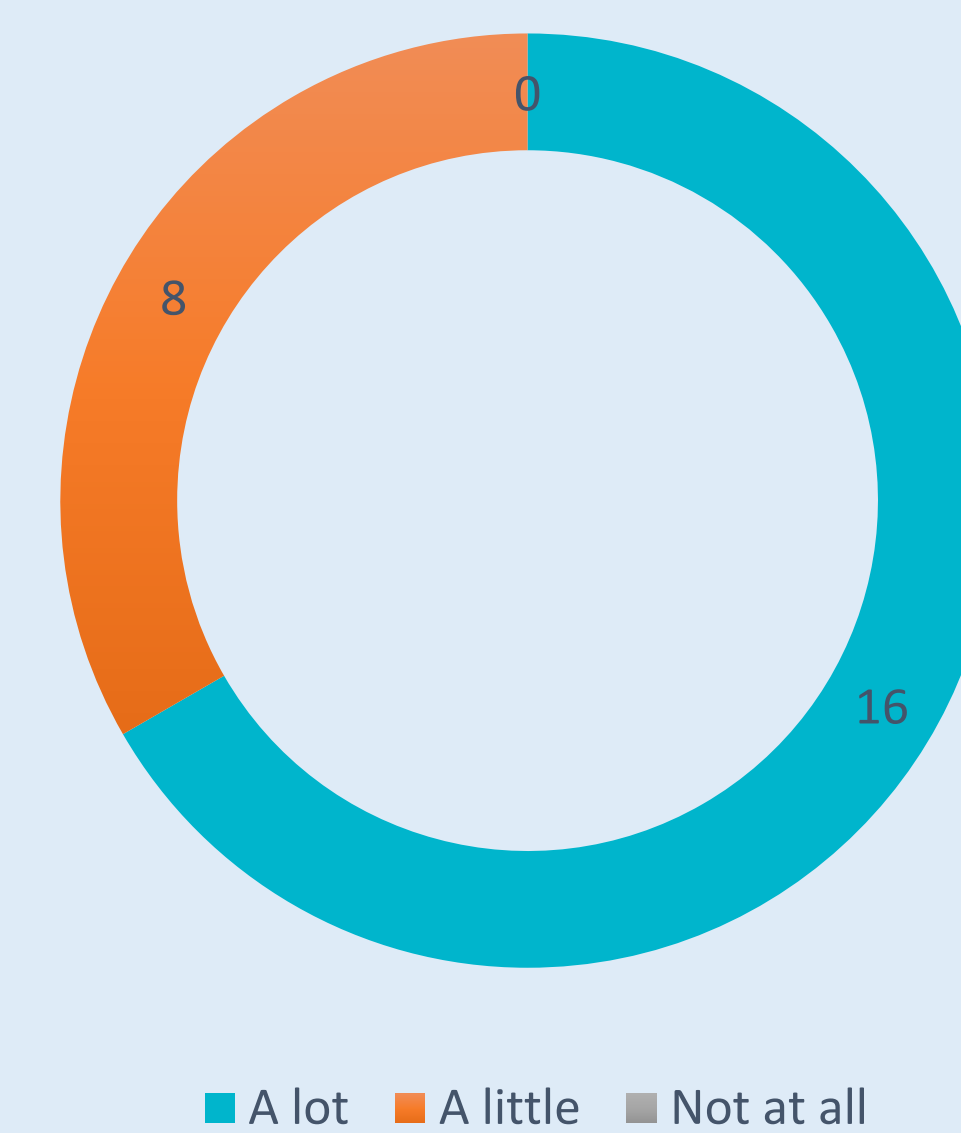


Chart 3: Will the presentation have an impact on your day to day job?
Total = 24



Results

Of 26 respondents:

- 96% found the presentation easy to follow
- 96% thought the presentations contained the right amount of detail
- 80% felt that their knowledge of resources had increased

Of 24 respondents:

- 66% felt that it would impact on their day-to-day work significantly

Feedback

"Very informative session and extremely useful especially for those at the start of their career in GP pharmacy."

"The session was excellent, well presented and complemented by the case presentations."

"Really enjoyed the first session-was very informative and have a lot more resources to avail of that I was probably not using to the full."

Next Steps

Following feedback, points to consider for future presentations include:

- Case studies sent in advance of the presentation- practice based pharmacists will have time to become familiar with the cases and the presenter can provide more detailed advice
- Include a wider range of resources e.g. resources that are easily subscribed to
- More information on each of the resources with a longer allocation of time for the presentation
- Audio-visual aids e.g. live demonstrations of the resources
- Obtaining data to ascertain if the number of level 1 calls has decreased in 2018-2019

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