

Standard Search Pattern Adherence When Answering Enquiries in the Medicines Information Department

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Introduction

Enquiry answering forms a large part of the work of Medicine Information (MI) services. All MI centres are required to meet the United Kingdom's Medicines Information (UKMI) standards.

Enquiry answering is one of the areas that is covered in these standards which is audited externally every three years.

UKMI have advised to use Standard Search Patterns (SSPs) when answering enquiries. SSPs are a list of resources in a specific order which are recommended for use for a particular type of enquiry. It is not an exhaustive list and other sources may need to be checked when appropriate. The list helps to ensure the responses are accurate and reliable as a wide range of resources are checked before a response is given. (1)

Standard, Aim and Objective

Audit Standard

100% of all enquiries should adhere to in-house SSPs.

Aim

Investigate whether the Welsh Medicines Information Centre (WMIC) is adhering to the in-house SSPs when answering enquiries.

Objective

Identify what percentage of enquiries are adhering to the in-house SSPs

Method

All enquiries completed on the MiDatabank in September 2017 were retrospectively analysed by an MI pharmacist and the following questions were answered for each enquiry.

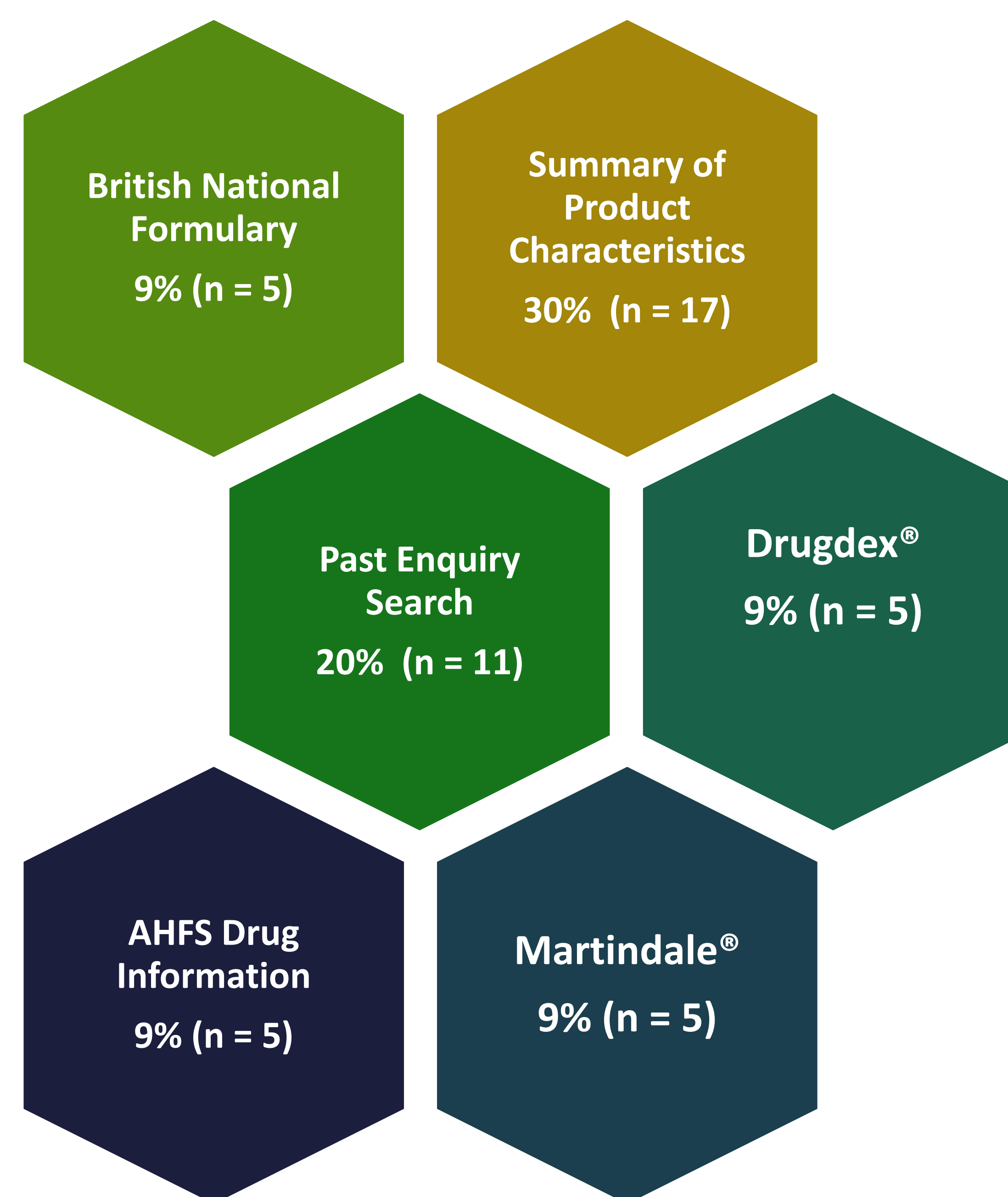
- Was the enquiry saved in the appropriate category?
- Have all of the relevant source(s) been checked?
- Number of source(s) omitted?
- Name of source(s) omitted?
- Were the source(s) looked in the order as specified by the SSP?



Results

Data collection was conducted on 203 enquiries; 79% (n = 160) adhered to SSPs and 84% (n = 170) checked the appropriate resources but not in the recommended order. From the 33 enquiries that did not check the correct resources, 15% (n = 5) of these omitted more than 3 relevant resources. MiSharer, past enquiry search and the electronic Medicine Compendium were the most commonly omitted resources. 60% (n = 20) of enquiries that did not adhere to SSPs were completed by an experienced MI pharmacist.

Figure 1: Commonly omitted sources



Discussion

Whilst the department did not meet its criteria, it should be considered whether having a standard of 100% SSP adherence is appropriate. It is a brilliant tool for trainees and provides a backbone on how to conduct research. However, for experienced staff whether it is a useful tool or a process that prolongs enquiry completion needs to be evaluated.

Nonetheless, the importance of checking past enquiries, MiSharer and specialist resources need to be highlighted to the department.

Conclusion and Further Work

This audit has demonstrated that the department does not fully adhere to SSPs. It is a useful tool for trainees and provides a foundation for them to complete the enquiry. However, for experienced staff whether it is a tool which prolongs the time taken to complete an enquiry needs to be evaluated.

This audit was a first of its kind within the department. It would be beneficial to identify what study methods have been utilised by other MI centres to measure their SSP adherence.

Acknowledgments:

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References:

United Kingdom Medicines Information (UKMI). Clinical Governance, Enquiry Answering. <http://www.ukmi.nhs.uk/activities/clinicalGovernance/default.asp?pageRef=4> (accessed 01 December 2010).