

Should practising Medicines Information Pharmacists teach on undergraduate pharmacy degree programmes?

Introduction.

The ability to retrieve, evaluate and communicate information and advice about medicines is a key skill for all pharmacists. It is part of the GPhC learning outcomes for pre-registration pharmacists appearing in all 3 units¹. These skills and knowledge are also included throughout the The RPS Foundation Pharmacy Framework and the RPS Advanced Practice Framework². The GPhC registrant survey published in 2014³ noted that the providing advice and information about medicines was one of the commonest activities of practising pharmacists. The GPhC has noted that technological and sociological changes will affect access to medicines related information⁴.

This survey in 2015 of UK medicines information pharmacists indicated that around half of the current undergraduate pharmacy degree programmes have input from practising medicines information pharmacists.

How much do practising MI Pharmacists teach undergraduates?

UKMi centres were invited to participate in an on-line survey during February-April 2015. The survey link was distributed via the UKMi network. 25 responses were received.



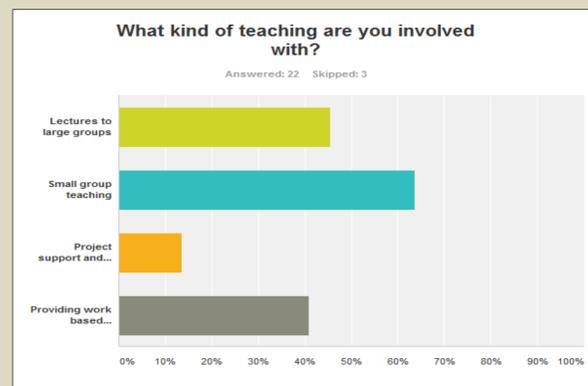
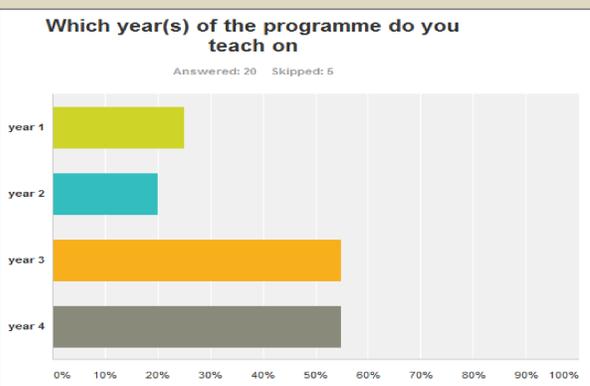
Main Findings

- About half of the current undergraduate pharmacy degree programmes have input
- Teaching in years 3 and 4 is most common. Teaching comprises a range of formats including large group lectures, small group teaching, project support and supervision and work based experience. Only a minority of cases involve formal student assessment.
- A combination of didactic teaching, case based learning and assessed presentations are the teaching methods used.

Schools currently involved

Aston University
Cardiff University
Kings College London
Manchester University
Queen University Belfast
University of Ulster
Reading School of Pharmacy

Robert Gordon University
UCL London School of Pharmacy
UCLAN
UEA
University of Bath
University of Nottingham
University of Strathclyde



Subjects covered

- Role of MI, MI networks and services
- MI skills clinical enquiry answering, commonly use reference sources
- Evidence based practice
- Therapeutic topics e.g. Mental Health, Infectious Disease
- Pharmacovigilance and medication incidents
- Professionalism and ethical aspects of providing information about medicines to patients and HCPs.
- Clinical reasoning, decision making
- Detailed literature searching prior to final year project
- Ethical issues including use of unlicensed medicines

An exemplar approach at one University has been developed with MI staff working in collaboration with academic staff. MI staff deliver teaching sessions to pharmacy students throughout the MPharm degree course and also at post graduate level. The MPharm teaching sits under the programme banner "**Clinical reasoning and influences to prescribing**" and over the 4 years develops the themes of problem solving, robust literature searching and critical appraisal.

| Year/Semester | Teaching |
|---------------|---|
| MPharm 1 | 1 "Influence and Evidence" lecture - covers professional duty and looks at a medical news headline and puts it into context. Introduces NHS Evidence and some standard reference sources Introduction to critical appraisal and Evidence based medicine (EBM) – lecture |
| MPharm 2 | 2 Clinical reasoning – lecture covering use of EBM - system 1 and 2 decision making |
| MPharm 3 | 2 Case based learning – series of 4 tutorials where students work on MI enquiries. Covers problem identification, search strategies and problem solving. The final presentations are assessed. Evidence based medicine and health economics – lecture |
| MPharm 4 | 1 Detailed literature searching – tutorials in IT suite focused on literature searches for 4 th year projects Evaluating research papers – lecture focusing on 4 th year projects |

| Time Commitment | |
|----------------------------------|----------|
| Programme planning | 6 hours |
| Preparing teaching sessions | 24 hours |
| Delivering teaching sessions | 24 hours |
| Conducting assessments | 16 hours |
| Collating feedback and reviewing | 3 hours |

The time commitment for planning and delivering teaching could be viewed as onerous though preparation time is reduced because much of the teaching is adapted from sessions prepared for other groups. MI benefits from the academic partnership and receives assistance with practice research. 'Wins' include:

- Up to 24 weeks of student time per year allocated to project work
- Access to the university's e-learning platform and library resources
- The opportunity for MI staff to gain experience of teaching and assessing students in an academic environment

Conclusion and Comment

- There is a good case for practising MI pharmacists teaching core skills to undergraduate pharmacists
- Only about half of the schools if pharmacy have input from practising MI pharmacists – is that enough?
- Is there scope for sharing teaching material within the UKMi network?
- How can the UKMi network get more involved?
- Any thoughts? Email them to Bridget.Rankin@gstt.nhs.uk

Trevor Beswick, Iram Husain, Bridget Rankin
UKMi Workforce Development Sub-committee

References

1. GPhC 2013 Revised learning outcomes for the initial education and training of pharmacists [GPhC link 1](#)
2. RPS Foundation and Faculty Frameworks.
3. GPhC Registrant Survey 2013 [GPhC link 2](#)
4. GPhC 2015 Tomorrow's Pharmacy Team [GPhC link 3](#)