

# An Exploration of Chief Pharmacists' Attitudes and Perceptions Towards Hospital Pharmacists Undertaking Research

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## Introduction

Research is described as 'core business' for the NHS<sup>1</sup> and the government's commitment to research is made clear in the NHS Constitution<sup>2</sup> as well as other key documents including the Health and Social Care Act 2012<sup>3</sup>, the NHS Outcomes Framework<sup>4</sup>, and more recently the NHS Five Year Forward View<sup>5</sup>.



In terms of the pharmacy profession specifically, the need for more pharmacy practice research has also been identified as pharmacists take on new and extended roles beyond traditional supply and dispensing functions<sup>6,7</sup>.

Previous research undertaken in this area has mainly sought the attitudes and opinions of community pharmacists. More recent studies have involved hospital pharmacists but most have been undertaken outside of the UK in Canada, Qatar, Thailand and Australia, apart from one study conducted in Scotland.

There is therefore a need to explore hospital pharmacists' attitudes and opinions towards research to better understand how to increase engagement.

## Aims

To explore the attitudes and perceptions of chief pharmacists to hospital pharmacists undertaking research.

To explore chief pharmacists' perceptions of the barriers and facilitators to pharmacists undertaking research.

## Research Design and Methods

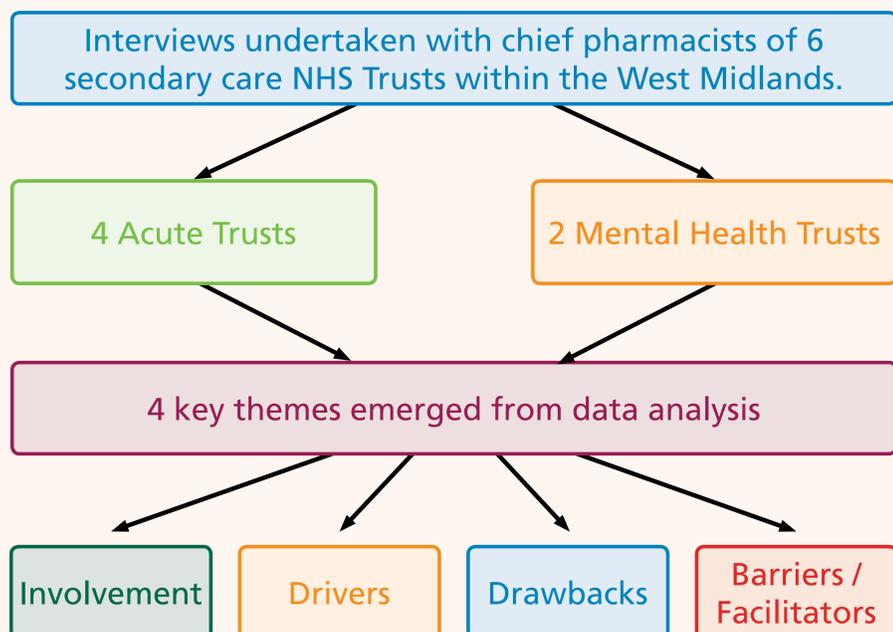
As the research was exploratory a qualitative research approach was chosen involving semi-structured face-to-face interviews with chief pharmacists.

Purposive, convenience sampling was used to identify participants and informed consent was obtained from all participants before interviews took place.

Interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim, and qualitative thematic analysis was used to identify themes.

Ethics approval for the research was obtained from Keele University School of Pharmacy Ethics Committee.

## Results Overview



## Results

### Involvement

All participants recognised the importance of pharmacists undertaking research.

*'...pharmacy, certainly hospital pharmacy, really should be doing research'*

However, only one saw it as their role to personally undertake research and lead by example.

*'It's incumbent upon us to actually drive research.....so it's a poor show if the deputy and chief are not doing research'*

No pharmacists at any Trusts in the study were undertaking research outside completing postgraduate qualifications.

### Drivers

Perceptions fell into 2 categories: personal and contextual domain.

Personal	Contextual Domain
Professional development	Organisational culture
Career progression	Leadership of chief pharmacists
Gaining a qualification	Professional e.g. improving services for patient benefit
Kudos	
Personal interest	

### Drawbacks

No drawbacks were identified by any participant.

### Barriers/facilitators

Perceptions fell into 3 key categories: resource; mindset; and organisational/professional culture.

	Barriers	Facilitators
Resource	Lack of time	Access to research expertise
Mindset	Lack of confidence Perceived lack of competence	Personality traits e.g. being 'freethinking' and less risk-averse
Organisational/Professional Culture	Lack of prioritisation	Profession-wide changes e.g. integrating research into career paths

## Discussion/Future Research

Participants recognised the importance of pharmacists undertaking research, which is consistent with previous research.

Key barriers appeared to be lack of time, lack of prioritisation and mindset.

Facilitators included access to research expertise and positive organisational culture.

Chief pharmacists themselves also appeared to influence research activity, with most supporting research in response to drivers, as opposed to being personally motivated to engage pharmacists in research.

Previous research<sup>8,9</sup> has referenced the influence of organisational culture on research activity as a barrier to research. The findings of this study differ however, in that they suggest that organisational culture could be both a barrier and facilitator to pharmacists undertaking research.

This was preliminary research to inform a more in-depth study which will use a case study design to further explore the characteristics of more research-active pharmacy departments, the findings of which could help inform policy to increase engagement of pharmacists with research.

## References

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