



# A survey to determine MPharm students' views on the role of the emergency department pharmacist



Helen Hull, Abbey Dempster & Nick Warren

## Introduction:

Resources for accident and emergency (A&E) services are growing and pharmacists are underutilised in the delivery of quality, emergency care for patients. <sup>1</sup>

The Carter Review recommends independent prescribing pharmacists in hospital should increase and there is a demonstrable need in emergency departments.

## Aim:

To investigate University of Portsmouth MPharm students' knowledge of the role and skills of emergency department pharmacists (EDP).

A difference in knowledge between final and second year MPharm students was also determined.



## Research Methodology:

MPharm students in Year 2 and Year 4 at the University of Portsmouth, completed a questionnaire.

Questions and statements about the role and skills of EDPs were included.

Descriptive statistics were used to analyse the closed questions and responses to open questions were analysed using content analysis. <sup>2</sup>

Comparisons of knowledge between the year groups were made.

## Results and Findings:

Final year students (n=66) were more aware of the growing resource issues within accident and emergency (65%) compared to 39% Year 2 students (n=75) and had greater awareness of the EDP role (77%) to (48%).

Long waiting times and increasing patient numbers were most commonly cited resource issues from both groups.

Year 2 thought EDPs would dispensing medicines meanwhile Year 4 thought EDPs would undertake medication histories.

Few respondents (14%), thought EDPs would prescribe medication or required a prescribing qualification (17%).

Students thought EDPs should possess team working, good communication and working under pressure skills.

The majority (87%), agreed EDPs add value to the NHS.

Few felt confident they could undertake the EDP role post qualification due to their own perceived lack of experience, knowledge and training (31%).



## Conclusion:

Final year MPharm students have greater awareness and knowledge of the EDP compared to those in Year 2.

All students had limited awareness of the responsibilities and qualifications required for the role.

Teaching of the EDP role should be introduced in the MPharm or pre-registration programme so pharmacists can expand their scope of practice following qualification.

Pharmacists are well placed to manage medicines across patient pathways, including medicines in emergency departments.

## Contact details:

Helen Hull  
School of Pharmacy and Biomedical Sciences,  
White Swan Road, Portsmouth, PO1 2DT  
Email: [helen.hull@port.ac.uk](mailto:helen.hull@port.ac.uk)  
Twitter: [@helenhull12](https://twitter.com/helenhull12)

## References:

1. Andalo D. Placing pharmacists in emergency departments could help 36% of patients. *The Pharmaceutical Journal* 2016; 296:7889.
2. Hsieh HF, Shannon SE. Three approaches to qualitative content analysis. *Qualitative Health Research* 2005;15(9):1277-88.