

Psychology Training for Enhanced Polypharmacy Reviews

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Background

Encouraging and supporting patients to have an active role in managing their medicines and health conditions can lead to increased health literacy, adherence and safety. The 'Transforming medication safety in Northern Ireland'¹ document commits to making medication safety a priority, aligned to the World Health Organisation's third global challenge². The iSIMPATY (implementing Stimulating Innovation in the Management of Polypharmacy and Adherence Through the Years) team are delivering medication reviews to patients in secondary care in Northern Ireland. A need was identified by the pharmacy team to enhance knowledge and skills to ensure patients are fully encouraged and supported to be active in managing their health and medicines.

Aims/Objectives

To review the impact of psychology support on inpatient reviews.

Methodology:

Four sessions were developed by a clinical psychologist and the iSIMPATY pharmacy team. These included motivational interviewing, adherence, difficult conversations, managing change and identifying and supporting patients' mental health. Sessions were analysed by a focus group. These sessions led to the development of a psychology workshop for final year pharmacy students at Ulster University. This session included difficult conversations, including role play, and patient adherence. Analysis was by a post-workshop questionnaire which had received ethics approval.

Results/Outcomes:

The pharmacist education sessions were very beneficial, positively received and have led to increased pharmaceutical outcomes for patients. Pharmacists describe enhanced knowledge and confidence in important areas including questioning and listening, motivational interviewing for lifestyle change, identification of mental health needs and confidence to support, managing difficult conversations and identification and actioning of poor adherence.

The final year pharmacy students all agreed or strongly agreed that they enjoyed the psychology session, that the presenters were engaging and that they could use their new learned skills. Feedback was very positive.

Student comments:

UUa: 'I have learned about the role psychology can have when interacting with a patient'.

UUb: 'The health psychology component is highly relevant for us as pharmacy students and I think is a valuable skill. I hope this is a component that will be explored further for pharmacy education'.

UUc: 'Listening to the role play helped me gain a better understanding of the type of conversation you would have'.

Conclusion

The pharmacist psychology sessions were well received and have led to increased patient care. Pharmacy students found the introduction of teaching by a psychologist to be valuable. There is great potential to enhance the delivery of student pharmacist education by psychologists.



References

- 1.Transforming medication safety in Northern Ireland, Department of Health 2022. https://www.healthni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/health/Transforming-medication-safety-in-Northern-Ireland_1.pdf (accessed 17/5/2022).
- 2.Medication Safety in Polypharmacy Technical Report, World Health Organisation 2019. <https://www.who.int/initiatives/medication-without-harm> (accessed 17/5/2022).