

Mental health: “It is a subject where most pharmacists [or pharmacy] students have no more knowledge than the general public”

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Introduction

- One quarter of people in the UK report a mental health problem
- Health Education England (HEE) highlight role of pharmacy professionals in their mental health core competency framework¹
- When we explored student’s views on Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training² they offered broad insight into mental health teaching and learning.

Aim

To understand the main themes in pharmacy students’ reflections on mental health and pharmacy.

Method

- 232 pharmacy students responded to our previously described survey²
- Open-ended questions about MHFA and mental health and pharmacy were included
- Thematic analysis was used³
- HM and HG produced initial coding and themes, with JS acting as third coder

Results



Conclusion

Pharmacy students identified mental health to be an important aspect of health, where stigma still exists. It requires focus in pharmacy degrees which could ultimately support increasing pharmacists’ involvement in mental health. Strong pharmacist-patient relationships were considered a platform for conversations about mental health, and something pharmacy students aspired to.

1. Health Education England. Framework of core mental health competencies for all pharmacy professionals [Internet]. 2020 [cited 2021 Sept 25]. Available from:

<https://www.hee.nhs.uk/sites/default/files/documents/Pharmacy%20Framework%202020.pdf> 2. Gorton, H.C., Macfarlane, H., Edwards, R. et al. UK and Ireland survey of MPharm student and staff experiences of mental health curricula, with a focus on Mental Health First Aid. *J of Pharm Policy and Pract* 14, 73 (2021). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40545-021-00364-1> 3. Braun V, Clarke V. Using

thematic analysis in psychology. *Qual Res Psychol*. 2006;3(2):77-101