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 guarter 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



Mental health is important

mental crises"

"I believe it's our duty as HCPs to help

someone in need just like we will do with

someone with any other health condition.'

Pharmacists' role

Stigma

when patients are struggling"

"I believe it is imperative that as "Mental health is a growing problem in society and as a healthcare professional we pharmacists we are more aware of mental health- it is a sector we can work must be adept at identifying and aiding in in but also we should be able to identify

> "We are in a very privileged position to intervene as patients tend to visit community pharmacies more frequently than going to the GP. Pharmacists have a big role to play in mental health awareness and education"

So, teach me

"I don't think that the information covered in the MPharm is enough to make me feel confident enough to deal with this scenario and therefore some extra training would be beneficial."

"I quess there is more emphasis surrounding the drugs and how they work and dosages rather than discussing how to talk with someone about their mental health."

"If it is taught in a more empathetic way, and by less ignorant lecturers, it would make a huge difference. In addition, the students that make light of mental illness ... were actually made to face consequences... it would benefit the health care system ... We need to stop reinforcing the negative stigmas surround mental health."

Conclusion

Pharmacy students identified mental health to be an important aspect of health, where stigma still exits. 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.



