

# PATIENT PERCEPTIONS OF CLINICAL PHARMACISTS IN GENERAL PRACTICE

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## BACKGROUND

- The growing demands of an increasing and ageing population pressurises the NHS to adapt in order to deal with such advances<sup>1</sup>.
- Pharmacists are highly qualified with extensive training in their degree and career but have previously been underutilised <sup>2</sup>.
- In 2015 the clinical pharmacists in general practice scheme was introduced. This included providing extra help to manage long-term conditions, advice for those on multiple medicines and better access to health checks <sup>3</sup>.
- The literature identified that other healthcare professionals, particularly general practitioners, embraced the addition of clinical pharmacists to their team <sup>4</sup>.
- However, there is limited research on patient perceptions of clinical pharmacists in primary care. Therefore, this research collected data on patient perception of clinical pharmacists from three different general practice surgeries in Walsall.

## Aims

To investigate the perceptions of patients regarding:

- Their consultation conducted by a clinical pharmacist
- Clinical pharmacists in general practice setting

## Methods

A flexible method in the form of a questionnaire was used to collect data.

- The questionnaire included both quantitative which underwent descriptive statistical analysis and qualitative elements which were analysed using content analysis.
- The questionnaire was paper-based.
- Patients that were eligible to take part in the research were each given a questionnaire to fill out which was collected on the same day.

Patients were selected based on the following inclusion and exclusion criteria:

Inclusion criteria:

- Any adults registered at the general practice aged 18 years and above
- Patients that had an appointment with the clinical pharmacist and had a physical examination and/or was consulted by one

Exclusion criteria:

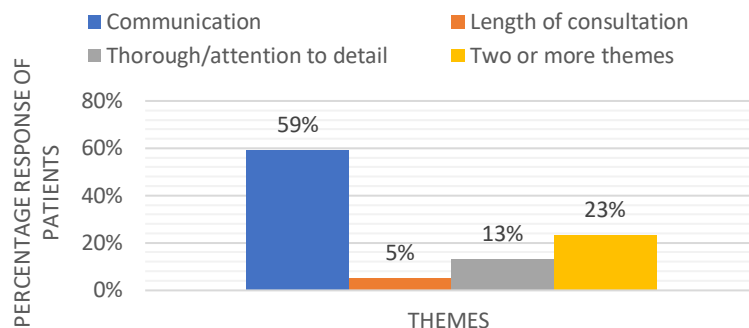
- Patients consulted by other healthcare professionals
- Children <18 years old
- Opinions expressed by other healthcare professionals
- Patients that were consulted by the clinical pharmacist through a telephone conversation

Consent forms was given prior to completing the questionnaire, and all patients were anonymised during the data analysis period.

## Results

- In total, 39 patients completed the questionnaire.
- 59% of patients views of the consultation were positive and were based on the communication skills and the knowledge of the pharmacists
- 13% of patients thought that the pharmacist was very thorough
- 5% were pleased with the length of the consultation
- 23% of patients responded with two or more themes (Figure 1).

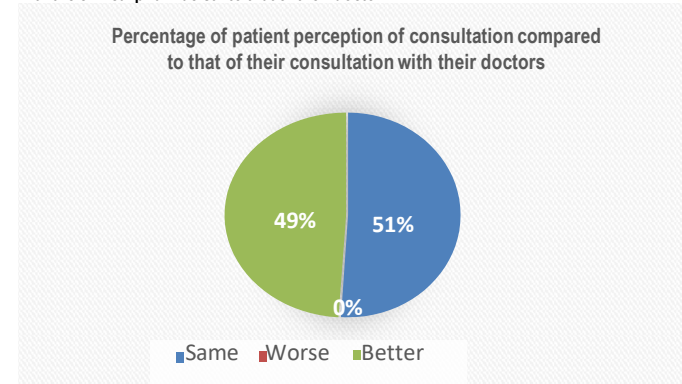
Figure 1: Percentage of response for overall views of the consultation



This chart illustrated responses for the overall thoughts of the consultation, and which theme these thoughts were based on.

- 51% of patients expressed that the consultation was the same as their appointment with their doctor.
- 49% stated that they believed the consultation was better (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Percentage of response of how patients would compare the consultation with the clinical pharmacist to that of their doctor.



This illustrates that 51% of patients thought that the consultation was the same as their doctors and 49% thought it was better.

By the end of the consultation:

- 82% of patients expressed that their perception of a clinical pharmacist had changed more positively.
- Over 70% of patients felt that the pharmacists involved them in the decision making and that the pharmacists was empathetic

Overall 100% of patients were happy seeing the pharmacists again and would recommend them to their family or friends.

## Discussion

- Overall, a positive response in patient perceptions of clinical pharmacists.
- The results coincide with the previous literature and is an extension to the limited research available.
- A limitation was that literacy rate of the demographic was not identified prior to study. A consideration for the future would be to incorporate younger patients in the inclusion criteria.

## References

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