

Ref: Review of UK Health Research

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Sir Cooksey
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Dear Sir Cooksey

Effective Medicines Management is central to the quality of patient care (1). As the Audit Commission have highlighted hospital medication errors are unacceptably common; the efficacy of medicines is increasing, but costs are rising; the complexity of ensuring the safe use of new medicines is growing; and there is an urgent need to review medicines management across whole health economies, as the distinction between primary and secondary care becomes increasingly blurred (1).

There are many research questions that require answering to ensure that Medicines Management is optimised such as the impact of clinical pharmacy on patient outcome and the role of drug formularies in reducing expenditure (2). Despite this, funding streams do not currently exist to support Medicines Management research, making the generation of a robust evidence base challenging.

Our experience has shown that DH Medicines Management initiatives to improve patient care are not always evidence-based, such as the implementation of medicine self-administration schemes for in-patients (3).

Therefore to support the generation of this essential evidence base, a co-ordinated programme of practice research is required to ensure that patient safety and service delivery are improved. NHS Medicines Management experts will need to strengthen existing partnerships with academia, form career pathways for junior researchers, and direct research output through a clear research strategy.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments

References

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2. Stephens M. Strategic Medicines Management. London: Pharmaceutical Press, 2005.
3. Wright J, Emerson A, Stephens M, & Lenan, E. In-patient self-administration programmes: a critical literature review. Pharmacy World and Science (pending publication).

Yours sincerely

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