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A survey looking at application of knowledge into practice: Pharmacy Education South London – two years on.

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Introduction

Pharmacy Education South London (PESL) was established in 2014 to provide educational events to community pharmacists and their team.¹ Between April 2014- April 2016, 1800 participants (500 different individuals) attended evening sessions covering 13 topics. Previous analysis from completed evaluation forms showed that 41.5% of attendees agreed the events would change their practice.²

Focal points

- To understand application of knowledge into practice after event attendance.
- After attendance actions were completed that support patient care and professional growth.
- Our findings show that attendees at educational events do, on the whole, apply some learning into practice.

Aims

The aim of the research was to establish what impact was on practice as a result of attending an educational event.

Objectives

The objectives were to understand attendance and the impact on activity after the event, including personal development and patient care.

Methods

A 15 question survey was designed using questions from the event evaluation form to compare intended actions with those completed, along with tick boxes and free text responses. Personal emails were not sent, as the researcher had not obtained consent to contact respondents via email. A survey monkey link was circulated in a training newsletter and the survey was given out to attendees at PESL events between September and December 2016. Returned responses were entered into survey monkey and analysed using Microsoft Excel and content analysis. Implied consent was given when completing the survey.

Ethics statement

Ethical approval was given for this study.

Results

A total of 122 responses were received giving a 24.4% response rate (122/500). Registered pharmacists accounted for 71 (58.2%) responders. Other responses came from students, pre-registration trainees, and pharmacy support staff. Over a quarter (26.9%, n=28) had attended 1 event, with 3 (2.9%) having attended all 13 possible topics. In total 433 events were attended. Overall, 5.8% of participants stated they had not completed any actions from an event (25/433). Almost half of attendees had completed a Continuing Professional Development Cycle from a session (45.3%, 196/433). Improvement of services and proactively dealing with patients/carers were also seen with 36.7% (159/433) selecting this. Consultations had been carried by 29.8% (129/433). When asked to provide case studies of application into practice, the cases reflected an improvement in medicines optimisation, clinical testing and counselling, plus passing information to staff and increased knowledge and confidence in services. Results were consistent regardless of number of events attended.

Discussion

Participants at these educational events demonstrated application of knowledge into practice by increasing patient care, increasing provision of services as well as sharing the knowledge gained with patients and staff. Whilst a minority of attendees had not applied learning, case studies were shared showing positive impact on services being provided to patients using increased confidence and knowledge. The study was limited by a low response rate, and as a large range of roles attended, some results may not reflect overall practice of one role. These findings show investment in education and training has an impact on practice and should be encouraged. Follow up of learnings from educational events should become common place.

References

1. News Item. Free training courses in South London to support pharmacy services. *Pharm J* 2014; 292: 524.

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Key words

Educational Research, Pharmacy Practice, Evaluation