

Increasing the evidence base for general practice based pharmacists

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In a report published in 2016 by the King's Fund, general practice in the UK was described as being in crisis, with increased workload not matched by growth in funding or workforce. The same report encouraged, as an immediate priority, the further development of the primary care workforce through expanding the role of nurses, physician associates and pharmacists.

In the current policy environment, the NHS is putting significant funding into the introduction of general practice based pharmacists (GPBPs). Pharmacists have worked in general practices for a number of years, but never in a widespread and coordinated way. Since mid-2015, NHS England have run a pilot where 490 clinical pharmacists have been placed in 650 general practices at a cost of £31 million. It was hoped that having GPBPs would allow GPs to "focus their skills where they are most needed, for example treating patients with complex conditions". The General Practice Forward View committed to a further £112 million investment, with the aim of placing a further 1,500 pharmacists in general practices by 2020.

There is a significant body of evidence in support of pharmacist management in chronic diseases. However, to date much of this evidence has arisen from community based pharmacist interventions rather than those based in general practices. What evidence for GPBPs exists has predominantly been conducted outside the UK.

We are looking to collaborate with researchers with an interest in building the evidence base for GPBPs, in particular in the ongoing management of chronic conditions.