

# Professional Development Award: Assessment and Supply of Individual Patients' Medicines

## Is it making a difference to the practice of our Scottish pharmacy technicians?

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### Introduction

The Professional Development Award (PDA) in Assessment and Supply of Individual's Medicines was accredited by the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) in 2011. The PDA was designed to provide Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and career progression for pharmacy technicians who are employed in a patient focused role, supporting the provision of pharmaceutical care to individuals in a variety of healthcare settings such as acute, community and primary care<sup>(1)</sup>.

The PDA consists of:

- The existing SQA Higher National (HN) Unit: Procedures for Pharmacy Dispensary Checking Technicians (PDCT) plus
- 3 Scottish Vocational Qualification (SVQ) units
- Pharm 29 – Take a medication history from an individual
- Pharm 30 – Prepare to conduct a review of an individual's medicines
- Pharm 31 – Determine the suitability of an individual's own medicines for use.

### Aim

To measure the perceived 'change of practice' of pharmacy technicians as a result of completing the PDA in Assessment and Supply of Individual Patients' Medicines.

### Objectives

- Consult with pharmacy technicians who have undertaken the qualification to determine their changes in practice
- Consult with pharmacy technicians who did not complete the qualification to ascertain why
- Provide examples of change in practice.

### Methodology

- Semi-structured telephone interviews (piloted) pre and post qualification (5 point Likert)
- Wilcoxon Matched Pairs Test to compare confidence scores
- Qualitative data analysis - codes identified and themed (Constant Comparative Method)<sup>(2)</sup>
- Findings were analysed in order to measure any perceived change of practice attributable to the PDA.

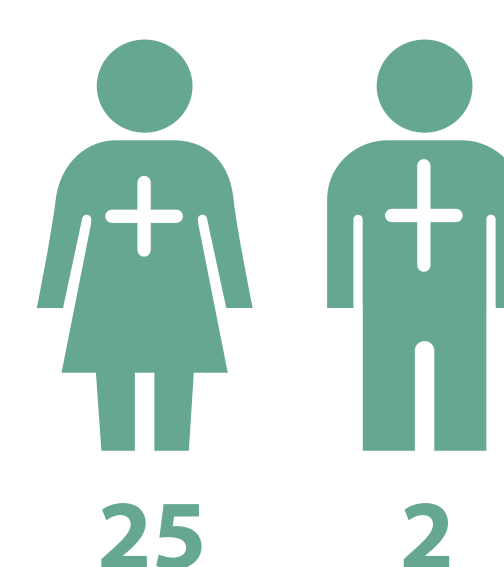
### Results

- 36 pharmacy technicians enrolled with Edinburgh College for the PDA (30 completed the course, 4 withdrew and 2 did not submit the required material)
- 4 completers used to pilot and modify telephone interview schedule
- **Interviews 27/36:** 23 completers/ 3 withdrawn and 1 who did not submit.

Results identified a statistically significant difference in learners' confidence in taking medication histories ( $p < 0.01$ ), preparing to review individuals' medicines ( $p < 0.01$ ), and determining the suitability of individuals' medicines ( $p < 0.01$ ) pre and post PDA qualification.

### Demographics

Of the 27 pharmacy technicians interviewed, 25 were female and 2 male of which the majority were in the age range 34 – 42 (10) and 43- 51 (10).



### Change of practice

#### 1. Confidence in taking a medication history from an individual? (scale 1-5)

Response	Before PDA (n=23)	After PDA (n=23)
Mean score	3.7	4.8
Median score	4	5

A Wilcoxon Matched Pairs test was used to compare reported confidence before and after the course, and the result suggested a significant difference ( $p \leq 0.01$ ).

#### 2. Confidence in preparing to conduct a review of an individual's medicines? (scale 1-5)

Response	Before PDA (n=23)	After PDA (n=23)
Mean score	4.6	4.8
Median score	5	5

A Wilcoxon Matched Pairs test was used to compare reported confidence before and after the course, and the result suggested a significant difference ( $p \leq 0.01$ ).

#### 3. Confidence in determining the suitability of an individual's own medicines? (scale 1-5)

Response	Before PDA (n=23)	After PDA (n=23)
Mean score	3.2	4.7
Median score	3	5

A Wilcoxon Matched Pairs test was used to compare reported confidence before and after the course, and the result suggested a significant difference ( $p \leq 0.05$ ).

#### 4. In what ways has the PDA changed the way you work? (n=23)

The following comments were made in relation to changes in working practice - reinforcement of knowledge; clarification of SOPs; better understanding of roles and responsibilities of the various team members; increased confidence and efficiency.

#### 5. What do you do now at work that you were not able to before? (n=23)

New areas of work reported were that they can now carry out a review of an individual's medicines or take a medication history (6); they can engage further with individuals (3), and 2 explained that their new role allows them to free up some of the pharmacist's time.

#### 6. Job satisfaction? (n=23)

Reports of increased job satisfaction (9); reinforced knowledge (5) and increased confidence by 4 pharmacy technicians. Six interviewees mentioned that they value having a certificate as a result of their work on the course and 2 said they feel they can now make a difference at work.

#### Views of trainees who did not complete the PDA (n=4)

The four interviewees gave a variety of reasons: 2 found the time required to be too demanding in conjunction with staff shortages, lack of support from management, and other training being undertaken simultaneously. One person had been ill, and the fourth felt that the PDA was very similar to their current role.

### Discussion

The PDA has facilitated pharmacy technicians in developing their role at ward level. Statistical evidence showed an increase in pharmacy technician confidence in taking a medication history from an individual.



### References

1. <http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/57437.html>
2. Charmaz K. Constructing Grounded Theory - A Practical Guide Through Qualitative Analysis. London: Sage; 2006.