

# STUDENT PHARMACISTS' EXPERIENCES OF INTERPROFESSIONAL EDUCATION DURING EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING PLACEMENTS

Clare Depasquale<sup>1</sup>, Amy Arnold<sup>1</sup>, Scott Cunningham<sup>1</sup>, Aisling Kerr<sup>1</sup>, Sabrina Anne Jacob<sup>2</sup>, Anne Boyter<sup>2</sup>, Ailsa Power<sup>3</sup>, Matthew Boyd<sup>4</sup>, Brian Addison<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Robert Gordon University, <sup>2</sup>University of Strathclyde, <sup>3</sup>NHS Education for Scotland, <sup>4</sup>University of Nottingham  
Corresponding author: c.depasquale@rgu.ac.uk

## INTRODUCTION

Interprofessional education (IPE) is viewed as essential to prepare a collaborative practice-ready healthcare workforce.<sup>1</sup>

## AIM

This study aimed to explore student pharmacists' experiences of IPE during experiential learning (EL) placements in various practice settings (community pharmacy, hospital, primary care, specialist).

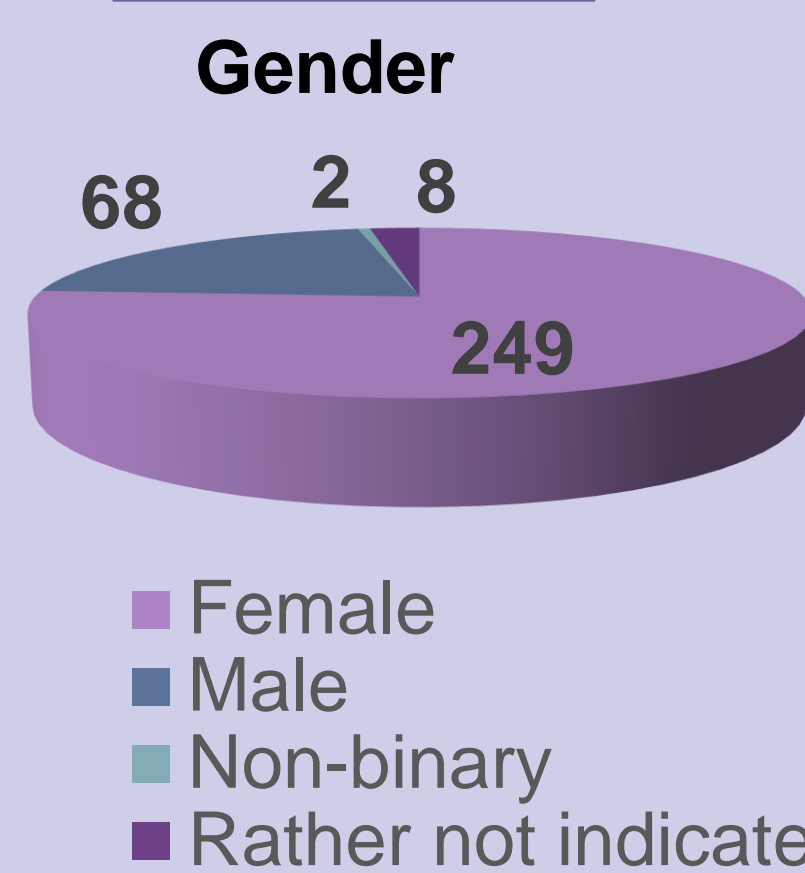
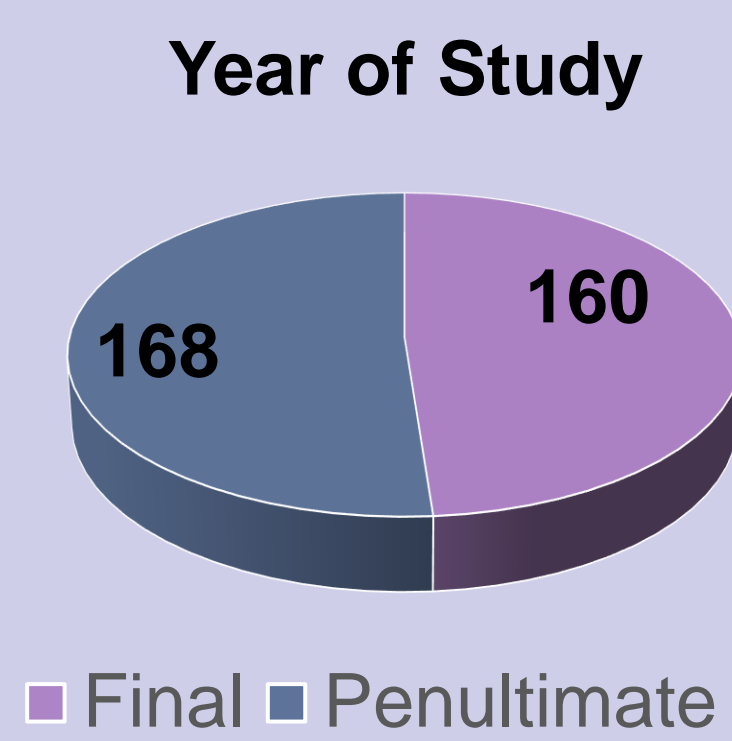
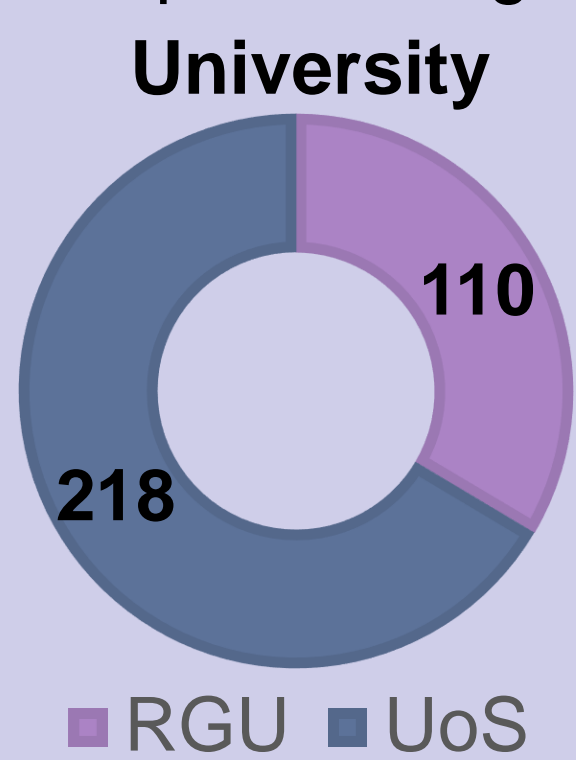
## METHOD

- A paper questionnaire was distributed to all penultimate/final year pharmacy students enrolled on the MPharm programmes at Robert Gordon University (RGU) and the University of Strathclyde (UoS) during the 2022/2023 academic year (n=485).
- Data collection took place during January-March 2023, shortly after student pharmacists attended EL placements.
- Participation was voluntary and questionnaires completed anonymously.
- Questionnaire development was informed by a literature review, discussions with the research team and systems theory (Biggs 3P Model).<sup>2</sup> It included 5 open-ended questions and a demographic section.
- Qualitative content analysis/thematic analysis were used to identify themes aligning to the research aim/objectives. Descriptive statistics were employed for demographic data.
- Ethical approval was granted by the RGU School of Pharmacy and Life Sciences Ethics Research Committee.



- 328 student pharmacists responded (67.6%).
- Respondent age ranged from 19-42 years.

## RESULTS



### Theme 1 Nature of IPE opportunities

#### Unplanned opportunities

"... I worked with doctors on my primary care placement. This involved the doctor coming in and asking the pharmacist to try and find alternatives to a drug that his patient was having adverse reactions to. We were also tasked with finding vegan safe products/drugs. This was unplanned but was a good learning experience." (R6)

#### Informally planned opportunities

"While on a hospital placement I interacted with different healthcare professionals .... this was planned that I would attend this MDT meeting to learn about the different roles ...." (R74)

#### Formally planned opportunities

"On my final year hospital placement, [X] had planned an IPL day for us pharmacy students with 2nd year St Andrews uni medical students in [X] Community Hospital. This was built into our EL timetable." (R137)

### Theme 2 Factors influencing interprofessional learning

#### EL facilitator factors (IPE prioritisation – facilitator)

"I was involved within a ward round in a hospital... This was suggested by the pharmacist at short notice on the day and agreed by me and my EL facilitator." (R79)

#### Student pharmacist factors (motivation/engagement – facilitator)

"...I contacted a medical student....this was done out of my own initiative, which I then discussed with my facilitator as it was a part of their specialised field of competency." (R54)

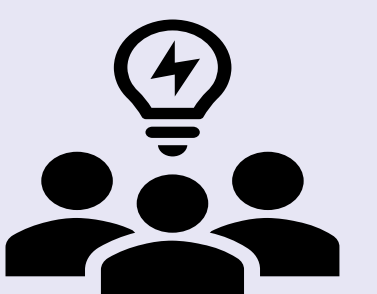
#### Placement factors (facilitator/barrier)

"Hospital pharmacy placements are the best example of IPE on placement as you are interacting with multiple professions on the wards as well as others in the pharmacy team ...Community is fine for internal learning within pharmacy but poor for working with other disciplines." (R63)

### Theme 3 Student pharmacists' perceived value of IPE

"I had never spoken to anybody outside of the pharmacy team prior to that so it broke a barrier for me. Learned that GPs are approachable, happy to work in tandem with pharmacists and that we're constantly exchanging knowledge and supporting each other. Realised pharmacists are quite needed in primary care." (R138)

"Very beneficial. Got to see how those professions work, make decisions and how everything ties together to help patients. Interprofessional learning is an absolutely essential part for all healthcare courses." (R73)



## CONCLUSION

- This study has provided valuable insights into student pharmacists' experiences of IPE in various practice settings and its perceived benefit to their professional and interprofessional development.
- More focus on the relevance of IPE in the EL curriculum could enhance student pharmacists' interprofessional learning.

1) World Health Organization (WHO). Framework for Action on Interprofessional Education & Collaborative Practice. [homepage on the internet]. Geneva: WHO; 2010 [cited 2024 April 2]. Available from: Framework for action on interprofessional education & collaborative practice (who.int) p.7.

2) Biggs, J.B. From Theory to Practice: A Cognitive Systems Approach. High Educ Res Dev. 1993; 12(1): 73-85.