RESEARCH IN COMMUNITY PHARMACY: MYTH BUSTER

Research is core business within the NHS. Nationally, research underpins the NHS constitution which gives a commitment to "innovation and to the promotion and conduct of research to improve the current and future health and care of the population" and the NHS Five Year Forward View ‘we will improve the NHS’ ability to undertake research and apply innovation’.

Research and evaluation are also embedded in pharmacy education and training. This carries through once you are qualified as a pharmacist to the professional development and recognition programmes and portfolios.

Research is also a core component in the RPS Strategy “we will drive and support research and innovation in medicines and healthcare”.

Research is everyone’s business! This guide aims to highlight some of the issues quoted as being barriers to community pharmacy involvement in research activity and to clarify some of the commonly quoted myths around these issues.

I need to be hospital-based to do research

False! Research isn’t just for hospital or university settings.

Community pharmacy has an important role to play in research. As a community pharmacist you can both lead your own research activities or engage in other research support activities such as, supplying treatments, identifying suitable patients, medicines optimisation activity, or audit and service evaluation.

Community pharmacy doesn’t get involved in research

False! Community pharmacy is already involved in research – see Fig 1 (page 2).

All pharmacy professionals use research evidence as part of their day-to-day activity and most pharmacies will be involved in research support activities such as routine clinical audit and/or service evaluations.

Community pharmacy staff can lead their own research and evaluation. There are also already many premises involved in supporting research projects by identifying patients or supplying treatments. In the RPS research landscape mapping survey 10% of entries were from community pharmacy and, as of November 2016, there are 186 community pharmacies who have already self-accredited as Research Ready. Further information on case studies involving community pharmacy can be found on the Research Ready case studies pages on the RPS website.

3 RPS Foundation Programme and RPS Faculty
4 RPS Strategy for 2016 – 2021
We are not involved in any research so there’s no point in being Research Ready accredited

False!

Research Ready enables community pharmacies to demonstrate their commitment to professional excellence and competence in the core skills required to engage in research and evaluation. By asking pharmacies to commit that resources, staffing and consent arrangements are in place the accreditation covers five core areas which are aligned with latest research governance frameworks. As part of the Research Ready self-accreditation, the Research Lead is asked to confirm they have completed Good Clinical Practice (GCP) training. Compliance with the principles of GCP provides researchers, members of the public and other healthcare professionals with the assurance that research activity in the pharmacy protects the rights, safety and wellbeing of research participants and that any research data collected is reliable.

By self-accrediting as Research Ready your pharmacy will be targeted by your local Clinical Research Network when studies are being planned in your area.

Even if there are no current studies in your area the Research Ready self-accreditation, GCP training and associated research support activity can also be used as the first step on your research and evaluation journey as part of your professional development and recognition portfolio.

We won't be paid for our time?

False!

The majority of the larger scale trials you’ll be approached to take part in include an element for pharmacy funding as do commercial studies (e.g. from drug companies). Funding from involvement in research studies can be a welcome addition to pharmacy remuneration as funding from other sources is squeezed.
Research won’t have any wider uses for me

False!

Research is a core component of professional development be it [RPS Foundation or Faculty] and all pharmacy professionals use research evidence as part of their day-to-day activities.

Via RPS Research you can access the [RPS Research and Evaluation Hub](#) (see below) which offers guidance and support on research and evaluation activities and access the RPS Research and Evaluation Toolkit (REET) which can guide you through the key skills and competencies of being involved in research for professional development.

![RESEARCH AND EVALUATION HUB](#)

- **INTRODUCTION TO RESEARCH AND EVALUATION**
  - Our handbook with all essential introductory level information about research and evaluation

- **PLANNING YOUR RESEARCH OR EVALUATION PROJECT**
  - Guidance on developing your research ideas and planning for your project including how to build an effective team, allocate resources and designing your research question

- **CRITICAL REVIEW AND ASSESSING EVIDENCE**
  - Support for you to critically evaluate the evidence base related to your proposal including how to search for and access information.

- **DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**
  - Guidance on choosing an appropriate design and methodology including qualitative research, mixed method approaches and clinical trials

**Good Clinical Practice (GCP) training**

As part of the Research Ready self-accreditation, the Research Lead is asked to confirm they have completed GCP training. Compliance with the principles of GCP provides researchers, members of the public and other healthcare professionals with the assurance that research activity in the pharmacy protects the rights, safety and wellbeing of research participants and that any research data collected is reliable. Information on upcoming [GCP training events](#) across England, Scotland and Wales can be found on the RPS website.

**I don’t have the time to attend a GCP training day**

In addition to the face-to-face GCP training, [National Institute of Health Research](#) or [Health and Care Research Wales](#) or [Clinical Research Training Scotland](#) offer online e-learning options which can be worked through at your own pace so you don’t need to set aside a full day.

**You need an NHS email address to sign-up to the Introduction to GCP training**

Community pharmacy staff UK-wide can sign up to GCP training from the [National Institute of Health Research](#), [Health and Care Research Wales](#) or [Clinical Research Training Scotland](#) from any email address.

**We haven’t budgeted for staff to complete the GCP training**

GCP online training is [free](#)!
There are so many pressures on community pharmacy – I don’t have the time to take on a new role as Research Ready Research Lead

Why not delegate the role? The Research Ready Research Lead in community pharmacy doesn’t need to be a pharmacist; we also accept applications submitted by pharmacy technicians. Research Ready self-accreditation and associated research activity can be an excellent way to develop your support staff looking to extend their role in the pharmacy.

It takes too long to complete the Research Ready self-accreditation

There are six steps to Research Ready self-accreditation. The six steps are:

1. Read and work through the Research Ready handbook
2. Determine who will be the Research Lead in the pharmacy
3. Decide whether you want to take part in health research or health research and clinical trials
4. Discuss Research Ready accreditation/re-accreditation with the pharmacy team and your superintendent/owner
5. Complete your Good Clinical Practice (GCP) training

As you would expect, working through the Research Ready handbook and undergoing the GCP training are the most time consuming elements of the process. As with any training, the time it takes to complete will depend on your underlying knowledge, skills and experience. We estimate that the Introduction to GCP will take between four and eight hours depending on your background. The online GCP training can be completed at your own pace and is ideal for busy community pharmacy staff as you can stop at any time and re-start the training where you left-off.

Once you have completed Steps 1-5 in your own time, we estimate the assessment will take between just 10 and 20 minutes to complete online. Entries are saved, so if you are not able to complete the assessment in one sitting you can pick up again at another time.

Research – why not?

Research Ready self-accreditation is free. Whether you are a Principle Investigator of a major clinical trial, taking your first steps leading your own project, supporting a research study by identifying suitable patients, or helping patients and surgeries with medicines optimisation issues, the RPS and RPS Research Ready help you to be the best you can be.

Further information

RPS has a wide range of resources to support pharmacy research which can be found on the RPS website.

If you have any queries please contact:

researchready@rpharms.com for information on the RPS Research Ready self-accreditation scheme
practice.research@rpharms.com for further information RPS research support