



Cardiovascular disease: how pharmacy teams are supporting their local communities



My name is Neha Ramaiya, and I am a Senior Clinical Pharmacy Advisor and Specialist Inspector at the General Pharmaceutical Council.

Part of my role involves working closely with the inspectors in the team to provide clinical expertise and advice on inspections of registered pharmacies providing novel clinical services or those that are associated with prescribing services.

Pharmacy teams in registered pharmacy premises are increasingly providing new services or working in different ways to help patients and the public maximise their health outcomes and to get the most benefit from their medicines.

When out and about on inspections of registered pharmacies, our team of inspectors have been delighted to witness good and excellent examples of innovative and inspiring practice which have been published as notable practice in our **Pharmacy inspections website's Knowledge hub**.

Below are some highlights of what we have seen pharmacy teams are doing to reduce health inequalities and support healthy living initiatives in their local communities, including interventions targeted at the risk factors associated with cardiovascular disease. Using our regulatory levers to raise awareness and help reduce health inequalities is a central part of our **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategy**, published in November 2021.

Services designed and delivered to meet specific local health needs

This pharmacy took a proactive approach to identifying the demographics of the local community and providing services closely aligned to this. This included the promotion of 'ask us anything' with frequent use of the consultation room and the creation of a work environment actively promoting healthy living to patients. Promotional badges and materials were used to highlight campaigns such as blood pressure measurement and smoking cessation. The pharmacy promoted the 'Know your numbers' week annually and actively supported patients with smoking cessation. The pharmacy participated in an **annual 'stop smoking day' and 'Stoptober' campaign**.

Identifying at-risk patients

This pharmacy proactively identified patients at risk of suffering from a stroke, developing Type II diabetes or having undiagnosed chronic obstructive pulmonary disorder (COPD). The pharmacy identified a cohort of 148 patients of which 10 were identified as being at high risk of suffering a stroke. They were immediately referred to the surgery for further tests. A cohort of 89 patients had been identified as being at risk of developing Type II diabetes. Of these, 25 were identified as being at high risk and referred for further tests. Three of these patients were subsequently found to have undiagnosed Type II diabetes. In addition, of the 89 patients initially identified, 59 were put on the weight management scheme. A cohort of 44 patients were identified as having potentially undiagnosed COPD. Seven of these patients had a FEV1 (forced expiratory volume at the end of the first second of forced expiration) of less than 70% of the predicted level. These patients were referred to the surgery for spirometry tests. Two of the seven patients were found to be suffering with undiagnosed COPD. The pharmacy had a **70% quit rate after four weeks on their smoking cessation course.**

New medicines reviews

This pharmacy liaised with community groups and care services, which had improved how patients used and understood their medicines with positive outcomes. New medicines reviews highlighted that some patients had their medicines changed from warfarin to rivaroxaban, but with very little information. The pharmacist obtained a patient's guide to the various conditions it was used for from the manufacturer, together with an alert card for patients to carry. Patients could share this with other healthcare professionals. This reminded patients when to seek additional help and signposted them to various other sources of information. Due to the success, **the pharmacy promoted the approach in other branches.**

You might also be interested to read two other case studies about how pharmacies provided healthy living advice and **tailored information to people using an online prescribing service** and proactively promoted **engagement with healthy living initiatives.**

Please get in touch if you have any questions about our work.

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