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Person-centeredness, Professionalism and Privacy: How does the public conceptualise the quality of care and its measurement in community pharmacies in the United Kingdom?

Journal:	<i>BMJ Open</i>
Manuscript ID	bmjopen-2018-027198
Article Type:	Research
Date Submitted by the Author:	12-Oct-2018
Complete List of Authors:	Watson, Margaret; University of Bath, Department of Pharmacy and Pharmacology Silver, Karin; University of Bath, Department of Pharmacy and Pharmacology Watkins, Ross; University of Bristol Medical School, Population Health Sciences
Keywords:	Quality in health care < HEALTH SERVICES ADMINISTRATION & MANAGEMENT, Organisation of health services < HEALTH SERVICES ADMINISTRATION & MANAGEMENT, PUBLIC HEALTH, QUALITATIVE RESEARCH



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3 Person-centeredness, Professionalism and Privacy: How does the public conceptualise the quality
4 of care and its measurement in community pharmacies in the United Kingdom?
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40 Keywords:
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42 Community pharmacy services; Quality of Health Care; Quality Improvement; Qualitative
43 Research
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ABSTRACT

Objectives

This study explored citizens' perspectives about the quality of community pharmacy services in the United Kingdom (UK) and whether and how quality of community pharmacy services should be measured.

Design

Semi-structured interviews and focus groups were conducted and were audio-recorded, transcribed and analysed systematically using an interpretive approach.

Participants

Members of the public

Setting: Scotland, England and Wales.

Results

Data were collected from 20 participants: 11 interviews and two focus groups (in community settings, with five and four participants).

Quality was conceptualised as multi-dimensional with inter-related overarching themes of person-centeredness, professionalism and privacy. The importance of relational aspects with pharmacy personnel was emphasised including the need for a "friendly" caring service, continuity of care, being known to personnel, including their awareness of individual's health conditions: *"it's quite a personal service I would say...I think it means that they care about your welfare"*.

Participants discussed the importance of a professional approach in customer interactions including staff behaviour and appearance. Pharmacy design influenced perceptions of privacy, including having sufficient space or a separate consultation room to promote confidential

1
2
3 consultations with a pharmacist. Participants suggested that quality assurance is needed to
4
5 improve quality and to inspire confidence in the public “*it would drive up quality standards*
6
7 *overall*” but suggested that quality ratings were unlikely to influence their use of specific
8
9 pharmacies. They emphasised the need for multi-dimensional quality ratings and for
10
11 transparency with their derivation.
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16 17 18 Conclusions

19
20 The public conceptualise quality of community pharmacy services as multidimensional and value
21
22 relational aspects of care provided by personnel in this setting. Whilst the development and
23
24 application of quality indicators may drive improvement, it seems unlikely to influence the
25
26 public’s use of individual pharmacies.
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32 33 Article Summary

34 Strengths and Limitations – 5 bullets re methods, not results

- 35
36 • a diverse range of individuals participated in terms of age, gender, and country but not
37
38 ethnicity
- 39
40 • data collection was undertaken by one experienced health service researcher who was
41
42 also a pharmacist
- 43
44 • data analysis was undertaken by two experienced qualitative researchers neither of
45
46 whom were pharmacists. This ensured a balanced approach to the analysis and
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48 interpretation of the data.
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- all key recurring themes were identified with no new themes emerging in later interviews or focus groups.

INTRODUCTION

Each year in the United Kingdom (UK), an estimated 650,000 emergency department (ED) consultations and 18 million general practitioner (GP) consultations are for conditions (hereafter referred to as self care consultations) that can be treated effectively by community pharmacy personnel, equating to around £1.1 billion in resources.[1, 2] In England, each of the 11699 community pharmacies [3] serves an average population of around 5600 citizens [4] of whom an estimated 89% are within 20 minutes' walk of a community pharmacy.[5] National policies and resources recommend the public to seek care from the most 'appropriate' provider.[6,7,8] Reassurance is needed regarding the quality of care provided in this setting in general, and more specifically for self care, which has been shown to vary depending upon the criteria used.[9,10,11] Whilst national quality indicators for community pharmacy were introduced in England in 2017 [12], none refer to the management of self care consultations despite this service being regarded the "shop window" of community pharmacy.[13] As such, the study presented here is part of a research programme to co-produce quality indicators for self care consultations.

The aim of this study was to conceptualise public perceptions and beliefs about the:

- quality of community pharmacy services in general
- management of self care consultations
- measurement of the quality of community pharmacy services

METHODS

Study Design

Interviews and focus groups were conducted with members of the public with the method used varying according to participant availability and preference.

Recruitment, sampling and consent

Participants were recruited through existing research networks such as Health and Social Care Alliance Scotland,[14] as well as community groups and personal networks. Individuals were eligible to participate if they used community pharmacy services, and understood and were able to communicate in English. An email was sent to potential participants with information about the study, advising them to contact the research team if they wished to participate. Recruitment ceased once theoretical saturation was reached (i.e. when no new themes were emerging from the data). A maximum variation sample was recruited using a combination of purposive, convenience, and snowballing techniques.[15]

Data Collection

One female researcher (MW), who is a registered pharmacist with over 20 years' experience of health services research, undertook all data collection. The interviews and focus groups were

1
2
3 face-to-face or by telephone, audio-recorded and were conducted between August 2016 and July
4
5 2017, and lasted an average of 51 minutes (range 31 to 74 minutes). No other individuals were
6
7 present during the interviews or focus groups. The topic guide was informed by existing work
8
9 on quality and quality improvement, as well as a precedent interview study involving
10
11 pharmacists.[13] It was not piloted prior to use but was modified throughout the data collection
12
13 process to incorporate relevant topics identified in earlier interviews and focus groups. The
14
15 concepts of “what matters to you”, “always events” and “never events” were included.[13,16]
16
17 Always events are “aspects of the patient experience that are so important to patients and
18
19 families that health care providers must aim to perform them consistently and reliably for every
20
21 patient, every time”.[17]
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30 Quality measurement was explored in general terms and more specifically in relation to the use
31
32 of rating or accreditation systems. The same topic guide was used for interviews and focus
33
34 groups. As new issues or themes emerged, they were included in subsequent interviews/focus
35
36 groups. All participants provided written consent to participate. On completion of the
37
38 interviews/focus groups, participants were offered a ‘thank you’ voucher worth £20.
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45 **Data Analysis**

46
47 Audio-recordings were transcribed verbatim by an experienced transcriber and accuracy checked
48
49 (KS/RW). The data were analysed systematically using Thematic Analysis.[18,19] The focus of the
50
51 analysis was to organise the data in a meaningful way according to the *a priori* aims of the study,
52
53 as well as to allow for the identification of topics and issues of importance to participants. NVivo
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1
2
3 11 (QSR International) was used to help organise, code and explore the data. Two researchers
4
5 (KS, RW) first familiarised themselves with the transcripts and coded to broad topic areas
6
7 (structuring codes). The next (extensive and iterative) phase involved the identification of themes
8
9 and sub-themes to reflect the research questions (a priori codes/nodes) and from within the data
10
11 itself (in vivo codes/nodes). As the analysis progressed, conceptual and crosscutting themes
12
13 were identified and coded, in addition to relevant topic codes.
14
15

16
17 Each transcript was coded by one researcher (KS or RW), with most coded by two researchers
18
19 (KS, RW) to ensure reliability. The themes, their names and explanations were continually refined
20
21 through discussion between the researchers to ensure that they were distinct from other
22
23 themes, internally coherent and consistently applied. The coded data were explored through
24
25 queries and other NVivo tools, and themes were mapped to identify connections. Once coding
26
27 was complete, a Framework approach [20] was used to support the systematic analysis of data
28
29 around the research questions, to enable an assessment of prevalence and coverage of key
30
31 themes (i.e. dimensions of quality). Further interpretation and discussion, to ensure that
32
33 analytical claims were congruent with the extracts, culminated in the creation of a thematic
34
35 resource document. This reported all the relevant coded data under overarching
36
37 themes/headings, with some extracts being duplicated under two or more themes (e.g. in the
38
39 case of richness or complexity). This study is reported in accordance with COREQ [21].
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50 **Consent and Ethical Review**

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52 The University of Aberdeen College Ethics Review Board provided ethical review and approval for
53
54 the study (CERB/2015/6/1208).
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For peer review only

RESULTS

In total, 20 individuals participated (Scotland (n=7) all interviewed individually; England (one focus group (n=4) and four individual interviews (one of which was face-to-face)); and Wales (one focus group (n=5)) (Table 1). The majority were British and female. Four participants had been employed previously in health-related employment (none reported pharmacy-related employment although one male sometimes worked as a delivery driver for a local pharmacy). The focus group in England comprised four women in their 30s, all parents of young children. The focus group in Wales comprised three women in their 40s and 50s who were all mothers, and two graduate students in their 20s. All seven participants in Scotland were recruited through the Scottish Patient Alliance, two participants in England were recruited through patient and public involvement (PPI) groups, and the English and Welsh focus group participants were recruited through professional contacts of the researchers (MW, RW).

Table 1 Participant characteristics

Identifier	Country	Ethnicity	M/F	Range	Healthcare background
I1	Scotland	White Scottish	F	50-59	NS
I2	Scotland	Irish	F	60-69	Yes (retired)
I3	Scotland	White Scottish	F	40-49	NS
I4	Scotland	White Scottish	F	20-29	No
I5	Scotland	White British	F	50-59	NS
I6	Scotland	White	M	70-79	No
I7	Scotland	British	M	70-79	Yes
I8	England	White British	F	70-79	Yes
I9	England	White British	M	60-69	No
I10	England	British	M	70-79	No
I11	England	White	F	50-59	No
F1_1	England	British	F	30-39	No
F1_2	England	British	F	30-39	No
F1_3	England	White British	F	30-39	No
F1_4	England	British	F	30-39	No
F2_1	Wales	British	F	50-59	No
F2_2	Wales	White European	F	20-29	No
F2_3	Wales	White British	M	20-29	No
F2_4	Wales	NS	F	40-49	No
F2_5	Wales	White British	F	40-49	Yes

I Interview F Focus Group NS Not stated

Dimensions of Quality: The three P's.

When asked “*what matters to you*”, participants’ conceptualised the quality of community pharmacies as multi-dimensional and inter-related with three over-arching themes: person-centeredness; professionalism; and privacy. Selected quotes are presented to illustrate these dimensions and themes (Identifiers I and F denote interview and focus group participants, respectively).

1
2
3 Person-centeredness
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5 Participants emphasised the importance of relational aspects with pharmacy personnel including
6 the need for a “friendly” caring service, continuity of care, and the staff ‘knowing’, the individual,
7 including awareness of their health conditions.
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14 *14: The staff are really friendly, and helpful,, it's quite a personal service I would say...I
15 think it means that they care about your welfare.*
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22 *18: I like continuity... It makes me feel safer, and um...it's like your doctor, you want your
23 doctor to know you.. it's nice to think that this person knows you and might actually take
24 an interest in you as opposed to you're just the next customer.*
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32 They generally wanted easy access to a pharmacist and pharmacies in terms of geographical
33 proximity and location, as well as opening hours which suited their needs and lifestyle, and
34 suitable parking or access by public transport. However, others were willing to travel further for
35 specific medication needs, or a better service.
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45 Some also wanted to the pharmacist to be visible and accessible in the pharmacy.
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50 *19: ..direct access, easy access to the pharmacist (...) because there are some pharmacists
51 [sic] you go to where the registered pharmacists is like someone hiding behind...a curtain
52 and you don't see them.*
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6 *F1_1: They [counter staff] are the gatekeepers aren't they? ..the pharmacist is in the back,*
7
8 *somewhere you know? It does feel like you have to have something really legitimate to*
9
10 *speak to them rather than them being available to speak to you (...). I don't know the*
11
12 *rules.. I would like to know the answer to that – when am I entitled to speak to the*
13
14 *pharmacist?*
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20 Interviewees felt that staff should take time to listen and communicate clearly, involve people in
21 decisions around their own treatment, be responsive to personal requirements and preferences,
22 and be respectful of individual concerns.
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30 *I10: [there should always be] a feeling that the person you are talking to has time for you*
31
32 *obviously. If you have the feeling that you are being a nuisance then you would be*
33
34 *reluctant to ask a second time.*
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40 Professionalism

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42 Participants discussed the importance of a professional approach in customer interactions
43 including staff behaviour and appearance. Although not all expected staff to wear a uniform, it
44 was commonly felt that they should be identifiable, for example, by wearing name badges.
45
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51 *I11: The staff would look clean and smart and presentable and the name badge confirming*
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53 *that they are not just Saturday girls, they are kind of trained professionals.*
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6 *F1_2: I guess maybe for them to tell you who they are - introduce themselves. 'I am a*
7
8 *pharmacist' or - so that you know exactly who you're dealing with.*
9

10 People expected staff (including, but not only, pharmacists) to be competent, suitably trained,
11
12 qualified and confident in their ability to diagnose, advise and prescribe, and for all staff to be
13
14 knowledgeable about over-the-counter (OTC) medication (i.e. medicines which can be
15
16 sold/bought without the need for a prescription), and be able to provide (cheaper) alternatives.
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22
23 *F2_3: If they are still uncertain they should always refer you back to your GP .*
24
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27
28 *F1_3: I don't know if it was the pharmacist or the pharmacy assistant to be honest but*
29
30 *she basically advised me to take a slightly cheaper model of the medicine... .. And I really*
31
32 *appreciated it, that's a nice thing to do.*
33
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37 Counter staff were expected defer to the pharmacist if necessary, who should then refer onward
38
39 as appropriate, but not be overly risk averse (a frustration for parents of young children).
40
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45 *F1_2: [I] went a few times when [name of child] was younger and then because I just kept*
46
47 *getting... 'I don't know what's wrong with him, he's got like a bit of a rash, or something,*
48
49 *is there anything you can give me?' and they were like 'oh we wouldn't like to say just go*
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51 *and see the GP'. Now .. I will go straight to the GP ..because ..they don't ever seem keen*
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53 *to actually sort of [sic] not diagnose.*
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6 Participants felt it was important that a pharmacy felt clean, light and “hygienic”. It was felt that
7
8 a good quality pharmacy should have sufficient stock so that prescriptions could be fully filled, in
9
10 a timely manner, to avoid return visits.
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15 *I6: it's got to be how quickly you receive whatever medicine or treatment you need ...*
16
17 *that's the most important thing.*
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23 Privacy

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25 Privacy was an important consideration, and included physical characteristics of the pharmacy in
26
27 supporting privacy, with either a separate consultation room or a dedicated private area, and the
28
29 need to have confidential conversations with the pharmacist.
30
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34

35 *I2: private consultation room that's accessible. Not at the back of the shop (...) I don't*
36
37 *think there should be over the counter consultations at the same section where people are*
38
39 *coming to buy their cosmetics or whatever or pick up their prescriptions.. it should be*
40
41 *separate, in fact go into [supermarket pharmacy] you've got to queue up with everybody*
42
43 *that's wanting their fags, or wants a lottery ticket.*
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50 Privacy was interwoven with confidentiality, which in turn, influenced confidence and trust in
51
52 pharmacy personnel.
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3 *I11: ..they reassure you ..(.)..you that it is a private consultation maybe and that your data*
4 *is protected as a minimum I suppose.*
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10 *I5: We do have a village pharmacy, but because of the lack of confidentiality I am now*
11 *taking myself a 52 mile round trip to get a prescription.() It matters that I feel confident*
12 *in the service that I'm being given, that I'm confident in the fact that my information is*
13 *being kept confidential, and that the fact is that the pharmacists on the whole genuinely*
14 *are trying to do their best by patients.*
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25 **Measuring Quality in Community Pharmacies**

26
27 Participants were asked whether the quality of community pharmacies should be measured and
28 if so, what measures to use. Participants suggested that quality assurance is needed to improve
29 quality as well as to inspire confidence in the public.
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37 *I5: ..the only way you're going to know that you're going to get a good service is to actually*
38 *publish the fact that you are getting a good service. It's like in hospital wards for*
39 *cleanliness, now they're putting up figures showing that they've managed to eliminate for*
40 *the last 100 days - they've had no MRSA - that gives confidence to patients when they*
41 *read that and see these facts and figures. And they're put out there for everybody to see*
42 *not just the few, that's important.(...) .it would be about saying to the good pharmacists*
43 *'well done you're getting it right every time'. But it's also saying to the other ones 'you*
44 *need to pull your socks up'.*
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6 There was recognition that quality could be difficult to measure across varied services and
7
8 discussion of which criteria to use.
9

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13 *F2_4: How effective was the information or how accurate was the information you*
14
15 *received, did it work for you, was it right or was it wrong or, how satisfied were you on*
16
17 *what you were told, and I think that's it in a nutshell really.(...)*
18
19

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21
22
23 Suggested methods of quality measurement included: customer satisfaction surveys/instant
24
25 feedback; audit; mystery shoppers; and the use of professional standards. The use of rating
26
27 systems was explored specifically. Participants identified similar systems associated with other
28
29 aspects of life, including: shopping (Amazon); travel (Trip Advisor); restaurants (food hygiene
30
31 ratings); health (hospital wards); and education services (Ofsted (Office for Standards in
32
33 Education)). Many participants expressed broadly positive attitudes towards rating systems,
34
35 whilst others questioned their usefulness based upon the use of similar systems applied to other
36
37 areas e.g. education. The relevance of these systems to community pharmacies was also
38
39 questioned due to the more complex, less “transactional” element of service/customer
40
41 interaction.
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50 *I9: There are ratings systems for things that - where a service can damage the public. ..()..*
51
52 *we already have food safety ratings for cafes and restaurants. One might ask why we*
53
54 *don't have one for something where the service could kill you more effectively, or more*
55
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3 *easily..(..).. you can tell a reasonable restaurant or cafe from your first consumer*
4
5 *experience, you won't necessarily know a really good pharmacy from a less than good*
6
7 *pharmacy.*
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13 Participants described potential positive, negative and unintended consequences of a star-type
14
15 rating system for reporting quality.
16

17
18 *I4: I think it would drive up quality standards overall. Yeah, I think it would be a good*
19
20 *measure. If chemists know that they're being rated they obviously wouldn't want a bad*
21
22 *rating.*
23

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28 *I8: .. I realise how frightened people are of their health...so I think if they went into a*
29
30 *chemist shop and saw that maybe it only had 3 and room for improvement, I think they'd*
31
32 *[the public] get nervous about that. So yes, there can be a rating but I don't think it really*
33
34 *needs to be displayed when it comes to health.*
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40 Some participants considered ratings systems to be too subjective.
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45 *F2_1: .. if it was general public rating then I'd be a bit sceptical but if it came from a*
46
47 *professional going in and give it an accredited, like the scores on the door, like it comes*
48
49 *from a governing body ... then I would have more tendency to go with what they said, ..*
50
51 *a non-biased organisation .. and you were judged (...) Maybe give it different categories,*
52
53 *maybe the customer service side ask the general public, but as far as the professional - the*
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3 *accuracy of what was given out and the way everything was kept - leave that part to the*
4
5 *professionals because I wouldn't be anyone to judge.*
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10 Most participants stated that they would take notice of star ratings if they existed but wouldn't
11 necessarily base their choice of pharmacy upon them. Some preferred to make their own
12 judgement. For most, the decision to use a particular pharmacy was contingent on a number of,
13 potentially overlapping, factors including accessibility, personal needs, time available and
14 perceived urgency. Given that most also expressed general satisfaction with the pharmacy they
15 used, and some had no realistic choice of using another, there was some scepticism around the
16 value of a star ratings type system in terms of what it might be based on and how it would be
17 used.
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32 *F2_2: It wouldn't affect my choice of the pharmacy unless it was maybe a one star out of*
33 *five then I'd be like well 'what's going on here like why' but if it was four or three I'd*
34 *probably wouldn't care because I probably wouldn't understand what the rating is based*
35 *on, who gave this rating to this particular pharmacy. I mean in restaurants I know that if*
36 *the hygiene -so I can imagine what it means - but in a pharmacy, but is it the customer*
37 *service, is it the way they organise their medicines, I'd probably just base my choice - based*
38 *on my experience.*
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52 **DISCUSSION**

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Statement of Principal Findings

Quality was conceptualised as multi-dimensional with inter-related overarching themes of person-centeredness, professionalism and privacy. The importance of relational aspects with pharmacy personnel was emphasised. Participants valued a professional approach including staff behaviour and appearance. Pharmacy design influenced perceptions of privacy, including having sufficient space or a separate consultation room to promote private and confidential consultations with a pharmacist.

Participants suggested that quality assurance would “*drive up quality standards overall*” and inspire confidence in the public, but they intimated that quality ratings were unlikely to influence their use of specific pharmacies. They emphasised the need for multi-dimensional quality ratings and for transparency with their derivation.

Strengths and Weaknesses

We included a diverse range of participants in terms of country, gender and age, but not ethnicity. We were satisfied that our sample size was appropriate in terms of answering our research questions relating to the conceptualisation of quality and its measurement.[22] One experienced health service researcher, who was also a pharmacist (MW), undertook all data collection. She did not disclose her pharmacist background unless specifically asked. The breadth and depth of topics covered suggests that participants felt empowered to participate and share positive and negative experiences of community pharmacy use. Data analysis was undertaken by two experienced qualitative researchers (KS, female and RW, male) neither of whom were

1
2
3 pharmacists. This ensured a balanced approach to the analysis and interpretation of the data.
4
5 Our interpretive analysis explored participants' understanding and sense-making of their
6
7 experiences of pharmacy services. We are confident that all key recurring themes were identified
8
9 with no new themes emerging in the later interviews or focus groups.
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15 **Important Differences in the results**

16
17 None of the major themes derived from our study are reflected in the national quality indicators.
18
19 This is perhaps unsurprising given that there was no patient and public involvement (PPI) with
20
21 indicator development. To date, there has been minimal PPI in the development of the few
22
23 existing quality indicators for community pharmacy services.[23,24,25] There has, however,
24
25 been limited exploration of the likely influence of quality ratings on patient behaviour. Our
26
27 participants anticipated that quality indicators would have little effect on their use of pharmacies,
28
29 reflecting the results of two US studies that concurred that patients would only consider
30
31 indicators if they were seeking a community pharmacy in a new area[26,27].
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40 **Meaning of the study**

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42 Our results show that the public value relational aspects of care i.e. personnel who are friendly
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44 and approachable, and reflect a recent UK-wide survey of over 1000 members of the public and
45
46 their preferences for attributes of community pharmacies when seeking care for minor ailments
47
48 (aka self care consultations).[28] As with these survey respondents, our participants also
49
50 prioritised ease of access and convenience as important attributes.
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Implications for clinicians and policymakers; and unanswered questions and future research.

Future quality indicators should involve stakeholders, particularly patients and public, as the main users of community pharmacy. Despite a possible lack of effect on care-seeking behaviour, the use of co-produced indicators *could* be used to drive quality improvement within and between community pharmacies.

CONCLUSION

The public conceptualise quality of community pharmacy services as multidimensional and they value relational aspects of care provided by personnel in this setting. Whilst the development and application of quality indicators may drive improvement, it seems unlikely that they would influence the public's use of individual pharmacies.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We thank all the members of the public who participated in interviews and focus groups as well as the organisations and individuals who facilitated recruitment of participants for this study.

FUNDING

This work was supported by the Health Foundation with Professor Watson's Improvement Science Fellowship.

COMPETING INTERESTS

None declared.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

1
2
3 MW led the scientific development and interpretation of the study, conducted most of the data
4
5 collection, and led manuscript production and revisions.
6

7
8 KS advised on and developed analytical tools and frameworks, and contributed towards data
9
10 analysis and interpretation, manuscript production and revisions.
11

12
13 RW contributed towards data analysis and interpretation, manuscript production and revisions.
14

15 16 17 **DATA SHARING**

18
19 No additional data are available. All data related to this study are included in this submission,
20
21 either in tables in the manuscript or in supplementary files.
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28 29 **PATIENT AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT STATEMENT**

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31 We did not involve PPI representatives in the development of the research questions and outcome
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33 measures or in the design of the study. However, patients and the public were recruited through: the
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35 Scottish Patient Alliance; two participants in England were recruited through patient and public
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37 involvement (PPI) groups; and the English and Welsh focus group participants were recruited through
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39 professional contacts of the researchers. Study results will be disseminated to all participants who
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41 expressed an interest in being informed of the results using a plain language summary that will be sent
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43 via email or in the post. All participants were thanked in the acknowledgements.
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Manuscript: Person-centeredness, Professionalism and Privacy: How does the public conceptualise the quality of care and its measurement in community pharmacies in the United Kingdom?

Consolidated criteria for reporting qualitative studies (COREQ): 32-item checklist

Developed from:

Tong A, Sainsbury P, Craig J. Consolidated criteria for reporting qualitative research (COREQ): a 32-item checklist for interviews and focus groups. *International Journal for Quality in Health Care*. 2007. Volume 19, Number 6: pp. 349 – 357

No. Item	Guide questions/description		Reported on Page #
Domain 1: Research team and reflexivity			
<i>Personal Characteristics</i>			
1. Interviewer/facilitator	Which author/s conducted the interview or focus group?	MW	4,6,19
2. Credentials	What were the researcher's credentials? E.g. PhD, MD	PhD	1
3. Occupation	What was their occupation at the time of the study?	Professor, Department of Pharmacy and Pharmacology	1
4. Gender	Was the researcher male or female?	Female	6
5. Experience and training	What experience or training did the researcher have?	Over 20 years' experience of health services research.	6
<i>Relationship with participants</i>			
6. Relationship established	Was a relationship established prior to study commencement?	No	-
7. Participant knowledge of the interviewer	What did the participants know about the researcher? e.g. personal goals, reasons for doing the research	Participants were briefed on the purpose of the study and understood that it was a research project being undertaken by MW.	6,7

		Ethical approval had been granted, participants reviewed the participant information documentation prior to giving their written informed consent.	
8. Interviewer characteristics	What characteristics were reported about the interviewer/facilitator? e.g. Bias, assumptions, reasons and interests in the research topic	MW is a registered pharmacist, which was a potential source of bias. However, MW did not disclose her background unless specifically asked. No other interviewer-related biases were identified.	19
Domain 2: study design			
<i>Theoretical framework</i>			
9. Methodological orientation and Theory	What methodological orientation was stated to underpin the study? e.g. grounded theory, discourse analysis, ethnography, phenomenology, content analysis	Open coding with thematic analysis followed by a framework approach to support the systematic analysis of data around the research questions.	7-8
<i>Participant selection</i>			
10. Sampling	How were participants selected? e.g. purposive, convenience, consecutive, snowball	Recruited via email using existing research networks, community groups, and personal networks. A maximum variation sample was recruited using a combination of	6

		purposive, convenience, and snowballing techniques.	
11. Method of approach	How were participants approached? e.g. face-to-face, telephone, mail, email	Email	6
12. Sample size	How many participants were in the study?	20	9
13. Non-participation	How many people refused to participate or dropped out? Reasons?	No participants who agreed to take part in the study subsequently refused to participate, withdrew their consent, or dropped out.	-
<i>Setting</i>			
14. Setting of data collection	Where was the data collected? e.g. home, clinic, workplace	Data were collected via telephone or face-to-face in a non-clinical setting.	6
15. Presence of non-participants	Was anyone else present besides the participants and researchers?	No.	6
16. Description of sample	What are the important characteristics of the sample? e.g. demographic data, date	Age range 20-79; 5 males, 15 females. Data was collected between August 2016 and July 2017.	6, 10 (Table 1)
<i>Data collection</i>			
17. Interview guide	Were questions, prompts, guides provided by the authors? Was it pilot tested?	Interviews / focus groups were semi-structured using a topic guide. It was not piloted, but was modified throughout the data collection process to incorporate relevant topics identified in	6-7

		earlier interviews and focus groups.	
18. Repeat interviews	Were repeat interviews carried out? If yes, how many?	No	-
19. Audio/visual recording	Did the research use audio or visual recording to collect the data?	Yes. Interviews / focus groups were recorded using an audio recorder.	6
20. Field notes	Were field notes made during and/or after the interview or focus group?	No additional notes were made.	-
21. Duration	What was the duration of the interviews or focus group?	The semi-structured interviews / focus groups lasted an average of 51 minutes (range 31 to 74 minutes).	6
22. Data saturation	Was data saturation discussed?	Yes. Recruitment ceased once theoretical saturation was reached (i.e. when no new themes were emerging from the data).	6
23. Transcripts returned	Were transcripts returned to participants for comment and/or correction?	No.	-
Domain 3: analysis and findings			
<i>Data analysis</i>			
24. Number of data coders	How many data coders coded the data?	Two.	7,8
25. Description of the coding tree	Did authors provide a description of the coding tree?	Coding described in methods section.	7-8
26. Derivation of themes	Were themes identified in advance or derived from the data?	Themes were derived from the data.	7-8
27. Software	What software, if applicable, was used to	Nvivo.	7-8

	manage the data?		
28. Participant checking	Did participants provide feedback on the findings?	No.	-
<i>Reporting</i>			
29. Quotations presented	Were participant quotations presented to illustrate the themes/findings? Was each quotation identified? e.g. participant number	Yes, themes/findings were supported with direct quotes attributed to anonymised participants.	10-18
30. Data and findings consistent	Was there consistency between the data presented and the findings?	Yes.	10-18
31. Clarity of major themes	Were major themes clearly presented in the findings?	Yes.	10-18
32. Clarity of minor themes	Is there a description of diverse cases or discussion of minor themes?	No.	N/A

BMJ Open

How does the public conceptualise the quality of care and its measurement in community pharmacies in the United Kingdom?: A qualitative interview study

Journal:	<i>BMJ Open</i>
Manuscript ID	bmjopen-2018-027198.R1
Article Type:	Research
Date Submitted by the Author:	08-Jan-2019
Complete List of Authors:	Watson, Margaret; University of Bath, Department of Pharmacy and Pharmacology Silver, Karin; University of Bath, Department of Pharmacy and Pharmacology Watkins, Ross; University of Bristol Medical School, Population Health Sciences
Primary Subject Heading:	Health services research
Secondary Subject Heading:	Pharmacology and therapeutics, Qualitative research
Keywords:	Quality in health care < HEALTH SERVICES ADMINISTRATION & MANAGEMENT, Organisation of health services < HEALTH SERVICES ADMINISTRATION & MANAGEMENT, PUBLIC HEALTH, QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

SCHOLARONE™
Manuscripts

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3 How does the public conceptualise the quality of care and its measurement in community
4 pharmacies in the United Kingdom?: A qualitative interview study
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40 Keywords:
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42 Community pharmacy services; Quality of Health Care; Quality Improvement; Qualitative
43 Research
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ABSTRACT

Objectives

This study explored citizens' perspectives about the quality of community pharmacy services in the United Kingdom (UK) and whether and how the quality of community pharmacy services should be measured.

Design

Semi-structured interviews and focus groups were conducted and were audio-recorded, transcribed and analysed systematically using an interpretive approach.

Participants

Members of the public.

Setting

Scotland, England and Wales.

Results

Data were collected from 20 participants: 11 interviews and two focus groups (in community settings, with five and four participants). Quality was conceptualised as multi-dimensional with inter-related overarching themes of person-centeredness, professionalism, and privacy. The importance of relational aspects with pharmacy personnel was emphasised including the need for a "friendly" caring service, continuity of care, being known to personnel, including their awareness of individual's health conditions: *"it's quite a personal service I would say...I think it means that they care about your welfare"*. Participants discussed the importance of a professional approach to customer interactions including staff behaviour and appearance. Pharmacy design influenced perceptions of privacy, including having sufficient space or a separate consultation room to promote confidential consultations with a pharmacist. Participants suggested that quality assurance is needed to improve quality and to inspire

1
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3 confidence in the public *“it would drive up quality standards overall”* but suggested that
4
5 quality ratings were unlikely to influence their use of specific pharmacies. They emphasised
6
7 the need for multi-dimensional quality ratings and for transparency with their derivation.
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9

10 11 12 13 Conclusions

14
15 The public conceptualise quality of community pharmacy services as multidimensional and
16
17 value relational aspects of care provided by personnel in this setting. Whilst the development
18
19 and application of quality indicators may drive improvement, it seems unlikely to influence
20
21 the public’s use of individual pharmacies.
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28 Article Summary

29 Strengths and Limitations – 5 bullets re methods, not results

- 30
31
- 32 • a diverse range of individuals participated in terms of age, sex, and country but not
33 ethnicity
34
 - 35 • data collection was undertaken by one experienced health service researcher who was
36 also a pharmacist
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 - 38 • data analysis was undertaken by two experienced qualitative researchers neither of
39 whom were pharmacists. This ensured a balanced approach to the analysis and
40 interpretation of the data.
41
 - 42 • all key recurring themes were identified with no new themes emerging in later
43 interviews or focus groups.
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INTRODUCTION

Each year in the United Kingdom (UK), an estimated 650,000 emergency department (ED) consultations and 18 million general practitioner (GP) consultations are for conditions (hereafter referred to as self-care consultations) that can be treated effectively by community pharmacy personnel, equating to around £1.1 billion in resources.[1, 2] In England, each of the 11699 community pharmacies [3] serves an average population of around 5600 citizens [4] of whom an estimated 89% are within 20 minutes' walk of a community pharmacy.[5] National policies and resources recommend the public to seek care from the most 'appropriate' provider.[6,7,8] Reassurance is needed regarding the quality of care provided in community pharmacies in general, and more specifically for self-care, which has been shown to vary, depending upon the criteria used.[9,10,11] Whilst national quality indicators for community pharmacy were introduced in England in 2017 [12], none refer to the management of self-care consultations despite this service being regarded the 'shop window' of community pharmacy.[13] As such, the study presented here is part of a research programme to co-produce quality indicators for self-care consultations.

The aim of this study was to conceptualise public perceptions and beliefs about the:

- quality of community pharmacy services in general
- management of self-care consultations
- measurement of the quality of community pharmacy services

METHODS

Study Design

Interviews and focus groups were conducted with members of the public with the method used varying according to participant availability and preference.

Recruitment, sampling, and consent

Participants were recruited through existing networks such as Health and Social Care Alliance Scotland,[14] as well as community groups and personal networks. Individuals were eligible to participate if they used community pharmacy services, and understood and were able to communicate in English. An email was sent to potential participants with information about the study, advising them to contact the research team if they wished to participate. Recruitment ceased once theoretical saturation was reached (i.e. when no new themes were emerging from the data). A maximum variation sample was recruited using a combination of purposive, convenience, and snowballing techniques.[15]

Data Collection

One female researcher (MW), who is a registered pharmacist with over 20 years' experience of health services research, undertook all data collection. Audio-recorded face-to-face or telephone interviews were conducted between August 2016 and July 2017, and lasted an average of 51 minutes (range 31 to 74 minutes). No other individuals were present during the interviews or focus groups. The topic (interview) guide was informed by existing work on quality and quality improvement, as well as a precedent interview study involving pharmacists.[13] It was not piloted prior to use but was modified throughout the data collection process to incorporate relevant topics identified in earlier interviews and focus

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2
3 groups. The concepts of “what matters to you”, “always events” and “never events” were
4 included.[13,16] Always events are “aspects of the patient experience that are so important
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6 to patients and families that health care providers must aim to perform them consistently and
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8 reliably for every patient, every time”.[17]
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15 Quality measurement was explored in general terms and more specifically in relation to the
16 use of rating or accreditation systems. The same topic guide was used for interviews and focus
17
18 groups. As new issues or themes emerged, they were included in subsequent
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20 interviews/focus groups. All participants provided written consent to participate. On
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22 completion of the interviews/focus groups, participants were offered a ‘thank you’ voucher
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24 worth £20.
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32 **Data Analysis**

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34 Audio-recordings were transcribed verbatim by an experienced transcriber and accuracy
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36 checked (KS/RW). The data were analysed systematically using Thematic Analysis.[18,19] The
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38 focus of the analysis was to organise the data in a meaningful way according to the *a priori*
39
40 aims of the study, as well as to allow for the identification of topics and issues of importance
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42 to participants. NVivo 11 (QSR International) was used to help organise, code and explore the
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44 data. Two researchers (KS, RW) first familiarised themselves with the transcripts and coded
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46 to broad topic areas (structuring codes). The next (extensive and iterative) phase involved the
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48 identification of themes and sub-themes to reflect the research questions (a priori
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50 codes/nodes) and from within the data itself (in vivo codes/nodes). As the analysis
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52 progressed, conceptual and crosscutting themes were identified and coded, in addition to
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54 relevant topic codes.
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3 Each transcript was coded by one researcher (KS or RW), with most coded by two researchers
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5 (KS, RW) to ensure reliability. The themes, their names and explanations were continually
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7 refined through discussion between the researchers to ensure that they were distinct from
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9 other themes, internally coherent and consistently applied. The coded data were explored
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11 through queries and other NVivo tools, and themes were mapped to identify connections.
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15 Once coding was complete, a Framework approach [20] was used to support the systematic
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17 analysis of data around the research questions, to enable an assessment of prevalence and
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19 coverage of key themes (i.e. dimensions of quality). Further interpretation and discussion, to
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21 ensure that analytical claims were congruent with the extracts, culminated in the creation of
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23 a thematic resource document. This reported all the relevant coded data under overarching
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25 themes/headings, with some extracts being duplicated under two or more themes (e.g. in the
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27 case of richness or complexity). This study is reported in accordance with COREQ [21].
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35 **Consent and Ethical Review**

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37 The University of Aberdeen College Ethics Review Board provided ethical review and approval
38
39 for the study (CERB/2015/6/1208).
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45 **PATIENT AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT STATEMENT**

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47 We did not involve PPI representatives in the development of the research questions and
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49 outcome measures or in the design of the study. However, patients and the public were
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51 recruited through: the Scottish Patient Alliance; two participants in England were recruited
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53 through patient and public involvement (PPI) groups; and the English and Welsh focus group
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55 participants were recruited through professional contacts of the researchers. Study results
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57 will be disseminated to all participants who expressed an interest in being informed of the
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3 results using a plain language summary that will be sent via email or in the post. All
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5 participants were thanked in the acknowledgements.
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For peer review only

RESULTS

In total, 20 individuals participated (Scotland (n=7) all interviewed individually; England (one focus group (n=4) and four individual interviews (one of which was face-to-face)); and Wales (one focus group (n=5)) (Table 1). The majority were British and female. Four participants had been employed previously in health-related employment (none reported pharmacy-related employment although one male sometimes worked as a delivery driver for a local pharmacy). The focus group in England comprised four women in their 30s, all parents of young children. The focus group in Wales comprised three women in their 40s and 50s who were all mothers, and two graduate students in their 20s. All seven participants in Scotland were recruited through the Scottish Patient Alliance, two participants in England were recruited through patient and public involvement (PPI) groups, and the English and Welsh focus group participants were recruited through professional contacts of the researchers (MW, RW).

Table 1 Participant characteristics

Identifier	Country	Ethnicity	M/F	Range	Healthcare background
I1	Scotland	White Scottish	F	50-59	NS
I2	Scotland	Irish	F	60-69	Yes (retired)
I3	Scotland	White Scottish	F	40-49	NS
I4	Scotland	White Scottish	F	20-29	No
I5	Scotland	White British	F	50-59	NS
I6	Scotland	White	M	70-79	No
I7	Scotland	British	M	70-79	Yes
I8	England	White British	F	70-79	Yes
I9	England	White British	M	60-69	No
I10	England	British	M	70-79	No
I11	England	White	F	50-59	No
F1_1	England	British	F	30-39	No
F1_2	England	British	F	30-39	No
F1_3	England	White British	F	30-39	No
F1_4	England	British	F	30-39	No
F2_1	Wales	British	F	50-59	No
F2_2	Wales	White European	F	20-29	No
F2_3	Wales	White British	M	20-29	No
F2_4	Wales	NS	F	40-49	No
F2_5	Wales	White British	F	40-49	Yes

I Interview F Focus Group NS Not stated

Dimensions of Quality: The three P's.

When asked “*what matters to you*”, participants conceptualised the quality of community pharmacies as multi-dimensional and inter-related with three over-arching themes: person-centeredness; professionalism; and privacy. Selected quotes are presented to illustrate these dimensions and themes (Identifiers I and F denote interview and focus group participants, respectively).

1
2
3 Person-centeredness
4

5 Participants emphasised the importance of relational aspects with pharmacy personnel
6 including the need for a “friendly” caring service, continuity of care, and the staff ‘knowing’,
7
8 the individual, including awareness of their health conditions.
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15 *I4: The staff are really friendly, and helpful, ... , it's quite a personal service I would*
16 *say...I think it means that they care about your welfare.*
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23 *I8: I like continuity... It makes me feel safer, and um...it's like your doctor, you want*
24 *your doctor to know you.. it's nice to think that this person knows you and might*
25 *actually take an interest in you as opposed to you're just the next customer.*
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32 They generally wanted easy access to a pharmacist and pharmacies in terms of geographical
33 proximity and location, as well as opening hours, which suited their needs and lifestyle, and
34 suitable parking or access by public transport. However, others were willing to travel further
35 for specific medication needs, or a better service.
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45 Some also wanted the pharmacist to be visible and accessible in the pharmacy.
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50 *I9: ..direct access, easy access to the pharmacist (...) because there are some*
51 *pharmacists [sic] you go to where the registered pharmacists is like someone hiding*
52 *behind...a curtain and you don't see them.*
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3 *F1_1: They [counter staff] are the gatekeepers aren't they? ..the pharmacist is in the*
4 *back, somewhere you know? It does feel like you have to have something really*
5 *legitimate to speak to them rather than them being available to speak to you (...). I*
6 *don't know the rules. I would like to know the answer to that – when am I entitled to*
7 *speak to the pharmacist?*
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18 Interviewees felt that staff should take time to listen and communicate clearly, involve people
19 in decisions around their own treatment, be responsive to personal requirements and
20 preferences, and be respectful of individual concerns.
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27 *I10: [there should always be] a feeling that the person you are talking to has time for*
28 *you obviously. If you have the feeling that you are being a nuisance then you would be*
29 *reluctant to ask a second time.*
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37 Professionalism

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39 Participants discussed the importance of a professional approach in customer interactions
40 including staff behaviour and appearance. Although not all expected staff to wear a uniform,
41 it was commonly felt that they should be identifiable, for example, by wearing name badges.
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49 *I11: The staff would look clean and smart and presentable and the name badge*
50 *confirming that they are not just Saturday girls, they are kind of trained professionals.*
51
52
53
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55

56 *F1_2: I guess maybe for them to tell you who they are - introduce themselves. 'I am a*
57 *pharmacist' or - so that you know exactly who you're dealing with.*
58
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1
2
3 People expected staff (including, but not only, pharmacists) to be competent, suitably trained,
4
5 qualified and confident in their ability to diagnose, advise and prescribe, and for all staff to be
6
7 knowledgeable about over-the-counter (OTC) medication (i.e. medicines, which can be
8
9 sold/bought without the need for a prescription), and be able to provide (cheaper)
10
11 alternatives.
12
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18 *F2_3: If they are still uncertain they should always refer you back to your GP .*
19
20

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22
23 *F1_3: I don't know if it was the pharmacist or the pharmacy assistant to be honest*
24
25 *but she basically advised me to take a slightly cheaper model of the medicine... .. And*
26
27 *I really appreciated it, that's a nice thing to do.*
28
29
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31
32 Counter staff were expected to defer to the pharmacist if necessary, who should then refer
33
34 onward as appropriate, but not be overly risk averse (a frustration for parents of young
35
36 children).
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41

42 *F1_2: [I] went a few times when [name of child] was younger and then because I just*
43
44 *kept getting...'I don't know what's wrong with him, he's got like a bit of a rash, or*
45
46 *something, is there anything you can give me?' and they were like 'oh we wouldn't*
47
48 *like to say just go and see the GP'. Now .. I will go straight to the GP ..because ..they*
49
50 *don't ever seem keen to actually sort of [sic] not diagnose.*
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3 Participants felt it was important that a pharmacy felt clean, light and “hygienic”. It was felt
4
5 that a good quality pharmacy should have sufficient medication stock so that prescriptions
6
7 could be fully filled, in a timely manner, to avoid return visits.
8
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12
13 *I6: it's got to be how quickly you receive whatever medicine or treatment you need ...*
14
15 *that's the most important thing.*
16
17

20 Privacy

21
22 Privacy was an important consideration, and included physical characteristics of the
23
24 pharmacy in supporting privacy, with either a separate consultation room or a dedicated
25
26 private area, and the need to have confidential conversations with the pharmacist.
27
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31
32 *I2: private consultation room that's accessible. Not at the back of the shop (...) I don't*
33
34 *think there should be over the counter consultations at the same section where people*
35
36 *are coming to buy their cosmetics or whatever or pick up their prescriptions.. it should*
37
38 *be separate, in fact go into [supermarket pharmacy] you've got to queue up with*
39
40 *everybody that's wanting their fags, or wants a lottery ticket.*
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46
47 Privacy was interwoven with confidentiality, which in turn, influenced confidence and trust in
48
49 pharmacy personnel.
50
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54 *I11: ..they reassure you ..().you that it is a private consultation maybe and that your*
55
56 *data is protected as a minimum I suppose.*
57
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1
2
3 *I5: We do have a village pharmacy, but because of the lack of confidentiality I am now*
4 *taking myself a 52 mile round trip to get a prescription.() It matters that I feel*
5 *confident in the service that I'm being given, that I'm confident in the fact that my*
6 *information is being kept confidential, and that the fact is that the pharmacists on the*
7 *whole genuinely are trying to do their best by patients.*

17 **Measuring Quality in Community Pharmacies**

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19
20 Participants were asked whether the quality of community pharmacies should be measured
21 and if so, what measures to use. Participants suggested that quality assurance is needed to
22 improve quality as well as to inspire confidence in the public.

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29
30 *I5: ..the only way you're going to know that you're going to get a good service is to*
31 *actually publish the fact that you are getting a good service. It's like in hospital wards*
32 *for cleanliness, now they're putting up figures showing that they've managed to*
33 *eliminate for the last 100 days - they've had no MRSA - that gives confidence to*
34 *patients when they read that and see these facts and figures. And they're put out there*
35 *for everybody to see not just the few, that's important.(...) .it would be about saying to*
36 *the good pharmacists 'well done you're getting it right every time'. But it's also saying*
37 *to the other ones 'you need to pull your socks up'.*

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52 There was recognition that quality could be difficult to measure across varied services and
53 discussion of which criteria to use.
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3 *F2_4: How effective was the information or how accurate was the information you*
4 *received, did it work for you, was it right or was it wrong or, how satisfied were you on*
5 *what you were told, and I think that's it in a nutshell really.(...)*
6
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10
11
12 Suggested methods of quality measurement included: customer satisfaction surveys/instant
13 feedback; audit; mystery shoppers; and the use of professional standards. The use of rating
14 systems was explored specifically. Participants identified similar systems associated with
15 other aspects of life, including: shopping (Amazon); travel (Trip Advisor); restaurants (food
16 hygiene ratings); health (hospital wards); and education services (Ofsted (Office for Standards
17 in Education)). Many participants expressed broadly positive attitudes towards rating
18 systems, whilst others questioned their usefulness based upon the use of similar systems
19 applied to other areas e.g. education. The relevance of these systems to community
20 pharmacies was also questioned due to the more complex, less “transactional” element of
21 service/customer interaction.
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40 *I9: There are ratings systems for things that - where a service can damage the public.*
41 *..(.. we already have food safety ratings for cafes and restaurants. One might ask why*
42 *we don't have one for something where the service could kill you more effectively, or*
43 *more easily..(.. you can tell a reasonable restaurant or cafe from your first consumer*
44 *experience, you won't necessarily know a really good pharmacy from a less than good*
45 *pharmacy.*
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57 Participants described potential positive, negative and unintended consequences of a star-
58 type rating system for reporting quality.
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3 *I4: I think it would drive up quality standards overall. Yeah, I think it would be a good*
4 *measure. If chemists know that they're being rated they obviously wouldn't want a bad*
5 *rating.*
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13 *I8: .. I realise how frightened people are of their health...so I think if they went into a*
14 *chemist shop and saw that maybe it only had 3 and room for improvement, I think*
15 *they'd [the public] get nervous about that. So yes, there can be a rating but I don't*
16 *think it really needs to be displayed when it comes to health.*
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25 Some participants considered rating systems to be too subjective.
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30 *F2_1: .. if it was general public rating then I'd be a bit sceptical but if it came from a*
31 *professional going in and give it an accredited, like the scores on the door, like it comes*
32 *from a governing body ... then I would have more tendency to go with what they said,*
33 *.. a non-biased organisation .. and you were judged (...) Maybe give it different*
34 *categories, maybe the customer service side ask the general public, but as far as the*
35 *professional - the accuracy of what was given out and the way everything was kept -*
36 *leave that part to the professionals because I wouldn't be anyone to judge.*
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50 Most participants stated that they would take notice of star ratings if they existed, but
51 wouldn't necessarily base their choice of pharmacy upon them. Some preferred to make their
52 own judgement. For most, the decision to use a particular pharmacy was contingent on a
53 number of, potentially overlapping, factors including accessibility, personal needs, time
54 available and perceived urgency. Given that most also expressed general satisfaction with
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3 the pharmacy they used, and some had no realistic choice of using another, there was some
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5 scepticism around the value of a star ratings type system in terms of what it might be based
6
7 on and how it would be used.
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13 *F2_2: It wouldn't affect my choice of the pharmacy unless it was maybe a one star out*
14
15 *of five then I'd be like well 'what's going on here like why' but if it was four or three I'd*
16
17 *probably wouldn't care because I probably wouldn't understand what the rating is*
18
19 *based on, who gave this rating to this particular pharmacy. I mean in restaurants I*
20
21 *know that if the hygiene -so I can imagine what it means - but in a pharmacy, but is it*
22
23 *the customer service, is it the way they organise their medicines, I'd probably just base*
24
25 *my choice - based on my experience.*
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32 **DISCUSSION**

33 **Statement of Principal Findings**

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Quality was conceptualised as multi-dimensional with inter-related overarching themes of person-centeredness, professionalism, and privacy. The importance of relational aspects with pharmacy personnel was emphasised. Participants valued a professional approach including staff behaviour and appearance. Pharmacy design influenced perceptions of privacy, including having sufficient space or a separate consultation room to promote private and confidential consultations with a pharmacist.

Participants suggested that quality assurance would “drive up quality standards overall” and inspire confidence in the public, but they intimated that quality ratings were unlikely to

1
2
3 influence their use of specific pharmacies. They emphasised the need for multi-dimensional
4
5 quality ratings and for transparency with their derivation.
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10 **Strengths and Weaknesses**

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12 We included a diverse range of participants in terms of country, sex, and age, but not
13
14 ethnicity. We were satisfied that our sample size was appropriate in terms of answering our
15
16 research questions relating to the conceptualisation of quality and its measurement.[22] One
17
18 experienced health service researcher, who was also a pharmacist (MW), undertook all data
19
20 collection. She did not disclose her pharmacist background unless specifically asked. The
21
22 breadth and depth of topics covered suggests that participants felt empowered to participate
23
24 and share positive and negative experiences of community pharmacy use. Data analysis was
25
26 undertaken by two experienced qualitative researchers (KS, female and RW, male) neither of
27
28 whom were pharmacists. This ensured a balanced approach to the analysis and
29
30 interpretation of the data. Our interpretive analysis explored participants' understanding and
31
32 sense-making of their experiences of pharmacy services. We are confident that all key
33
34 recurring themes were identified with no new themes emerging in the later interviews or
35
36 focus groups.
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47 **Important Differences in the results**

48
49 None of the major themes derived from our study are reflected in the national quality
50
51 indicators. This is perhaps unsurprising given that there was no patient and public
52
53 involvement (PPI) with indicator development. To date, there has been minimal PPI in the
54
55 development of the few existing quality indicators for community pharmacy
56
57 services.[23,24,25] There has, however, been limited exploration of the likely influence of
58
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1
2
3 quality ratings on patient behaviour. Our participants anticipated that quality indicators
4
5 would have little effect on their use of pharmacies, reflecting the results of two US studies
6
7 that concurred that patients would only consider indicators if they were seeking a community
8
9 pharmacy in a new area[26,27].
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15 **Meaning of the study**

16
17 Our results show that the public value relational aspects of care i.e. personnel who are
18
19 friendly and approachable, and reflect a recent UK-wide survey of over 1000 members of the
20
21 public and their preferences for attributes of community pharmacies when seeking care for
22
23 minor ailments (aka self-care consultations).[28] As with these survey respondents, our
24
25 participants also prioritised ease of access and convenience as important attributes.
26
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32 **Implications for clinicians and policymakers; and unanswered questions and future** 33 **research.**

34
35 Future quality indicators should involve stakeholders, particularly patients and public, as the
36
37 main users of community pharmacy. Despite a possible lack of effect on care-seeking
38
39 behaviour, the use of co-produced indicators *could* be used to drive quality improvement
40
41 within and between community pharmacies.
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50 **CONCLUSION**

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52 The public conceptualise quality of community pharmacy services as multidimensional and
53
54 they value relational aspects of care provided by personnel in this setting. Whilst the
55
56 development and application of quality indicators may drive improvement, it seems unlikely
57
58 that they would influence the public's use of individual pharmacies.
59
60

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We thank all the members of the public who participated in interviews and focus groups as well as the organisations and individuals who facilitated recruitment of participants for this study.

FUNDING

This work was supported by the Health Foundation with Professor Watson's Improvement Science Fellowship.

COMPETING INTERESTS

None declared.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

MW led the scientific development and interpretation of the study, conducted most of the data collection, and led manuscript production and revisions.

KS advised on and developed analytical tools and frameworks, and contributed towards data analysis and interpretation, manuscript production and revisions.

RW contributed towards data analysis and interpretation, manuscript production and revisions.

DATA SHARING

No additional data are available. All data related to this study are included in this submission, either in tables in the manuscript or in supplementary files.

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For peer review only

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Manuscript: How does the public conceptualise the quality of care and its measurement in community pharmacies in the United Kingdom?: A qualitative interview study

Consolidated criteria for reporting qualitative studies (COREQ): 32-item checklist

Developed from:

Tong A, Sainsbury P, Craig J. Consolidated criteria for reporting qualitative research (COREQ): a 32-item checklist for interviews and focus groups. *International Journal for Quality in Health Care*. 2007. Volume 19, Number 6: pp. 349 – 357

No. Item	Guide questions/description		Reported on Page #
Domain 1: Research team and reflexivity			
<i>Personal Characteristics</i>			
1. Interviewer/facilitator	Which author/s conducted the interview or focus group?	MW	4,6,19
2. Credentials	What were the researcher's credentials? E.g. PhD, MD	PhD	1
3. Occupation	What was their occupation at the time of the study?	Professor, Department of Pharmacy and Pharmacology	1
4. Gender	Was the researcher male or female?	Female	6
5. Experience and training	What experience or training did the researcher have?	Over 20 years' experience of health services research.	6
<i>Relationship with participants</i>			
6. Relationship established	Was a relationship established prior to study commencement?	No	-
7. Participant knowledge of the interviewer	What did the participants know about the researcher? e.g. personal goals, reasons for doing the research	Participants were briefed on the purpose of the study and understood that it was a research project being undertaken by MW. Ethical approval had	6,7

		been granted, participants reviewed the participant information documentation prior to giving their written informed consent.	
8. Interviewer characteristics	What characteristics were reported about the interviewer/facilitator? e.g. Bias, assumptions, reasons and interests in the research topic	MW is a registered pharmacist, which was a potential source of bias. However, MW did not disclose her background unless specifically asked. No other interviewer-related biases were identified.	19
Domain 2: study design			
<i>Theoretical framework</i>			
9. Methodological orientation and Theory	What methodological orientation was stated to underpin the study? e.g. grounded theory, discourse analysis, ethnography, phenomenology, content analysis	Open coding with thematic analysis followed by a framework approach to support the systematic analysis of data around the research questions.	7-8
<i>Participant selection</i>			
10. Sampling	How were participants selected? e.g. purposive, convenience, consecutive, snowball	Recruited via email using existing research networks, community groups, and personal networks. A maximum variation sample was recruited using a combination of purposive,	6

		convenience, and snowballing techniques.	
11. Method of approach	How were participants approached? e.g. face-to-face, telephone, mail, email	Email	6
12. Sample size	How many participants were in the study?	20	9
13. Non-participation	How many people refused to participate or dropped out? Reasons?	No participants who agreed to take part in the study subsequently refused to participate, withdrew their consent, or dropped out.	-
<i>Setting</i>			
14. Setting of data collection	Where was the data collected? e.g. home, clinic, workplace	Data were collected via telephone or face-to-face in a non-clinical setting.	6
15. Presence of non-participants	Was anyone else present besides the participants and researchers?	No.	6
16. Description of sample	What are the important characteristics of the sample? e.g. demographic data, date	Age range 20-79; 5 males, 15 females. Data was collected between August 2016 and July 2017.	6, 10 (Table 1)
<i>Data collection</i>			
17. Interview guide	Were questions, prompts, guides provided by the authors? Was it pilot tested?	Interviews / focus groups were semi-structured using a topic guide. It was not piloted, but was modified throughout the data collection process to incorporate relevant topics identified in earlier interviews	6-7

		and focus groups.	
18. Repeat interviews	Were repeat interviews carried out? If yes, how many?	No	-
19. Audio/visual recording	Did the research use audio or visual recording to collect the data?	Yes. Interviews / focus groups were recorded using an audio recorder.	6
20. Field notes	Were field notes made during and/or after the interview or focus group?	No additional notes were made.	-
21. Duration	What was the duration of the interviews or focus group?	The semi-structured interviews / focus groups lasted an average of 51 minutes (range 31 to 74 minutes).	6
22. Data saturation	Was data saturation discussed?	Yes. Recruitment ceased once theoretical saturation was reached (i.e. when no new themes were emerging from the data).	6
23. Transcripts returned	Were transcripts returned to participants for comment and/or correction?	No.	-
Domain 3: analysis and findings			
<i>Data analysis</i>			
24. Number of data coders	How many data coders coded the data?	Two.	7,8
25. Description of the coding tree	Did authors provide a description of the coding tree?	Coding described in methods section.	7-8
26. Derivation of themes	Were themes identified in advance or derived from the data?	Themes were derived from the data.	7-8
27. Software	What software, if applicable, was used to manage the data?	Nvivo.	7-8

28. Participant checking	Did participants provide feedback on the findings?	No.	-
<i>Reporting</i>			
29. Quotations presented	Were participant quotations presented to illustrate the themes/findings? Was each quotation identified? e.g. participant number	Yes, themes/findings were supported with direct quotes attributed to anonymised participants.	10-18
30. Data and findings consistent	Was there consistency between the data presented and the findings?	Yes.	10-18
31. Clarity of major themes	Were major themes clearly presented in the findings?	Yes.	10-18
32. Clarity of minor themes	Is there a description of diverse cases or discussion of minor themes?	No.	N/A

BMJ Open

How does the public conceptualise the quality of care and its measurement in community pharmacies in the United Kingdom? A qualitative interview study

Journal:	<i>BMJ Open</i>
Manuscript ID	bmjopen-2018-027198.R2
Article Type:	Research
Date Submitted by the Author:	12-Feb-2019
Complete List of Authors:	Watson, Margaret; University of Bath, Department of Pharmacy and Pharmacology Silver, Karin; University of Bath, Department of Pharmacy and Pharmacology Watkins, Ross; University of Bristol Medical School, Population Health Sciences
Primary Subject Heading:	Health services research
Secondary Subject Heading:	Pharmacology and therapeutics, Qualitative research
Keywords:	Quality in health care < HEALTH SERVICES ADMINISTRATION & MANAGEMENT, Organisation of health services < HEALTH SERVICES ADMINISTRATION & MANAGEMENT, PUBLIC HEALTH, QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

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3 How does the public conceptualise the quality of care and its measurement in community
4 pharmacies in the United Kingdom? A qualitative interview study
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36
37
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40 Keywords:
41

42 Community pharmacy services; Quality of Health Care; Quality Improvement; Qualitative
43 Research
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ABSTRACT

Objectives

This study explored citizens' perspectives about the quality of community pharmacy services in the United Kingdom (UK) and whether and how the quality of community pharmacy services should be measured.

Design

Semi-structured interviews and focus groups were conducted and were audio-recorded, transcribed and analysed systematically using an interpretive approach.

Participants

Members of the public were approached via networks, such as Health and Social Care Alliance Scotland, as well as community groups and personal networks.

Setting

Scotland, England and Wales.

Results

Data were collected from 20 participants: 11 interviews and two focus groups (in community settings, with five and four participants). Quality was conceptualised as multi-dimensional with inter-related overarching themes of person-centeredness, professionalism, and privacy. The importance of relational aspects with pharmacy personnel was emphasised including the need for a "friendly" caring service, continuity of care, being known to personnel, including their awareness of individual's health conditions: *"it's quite a personal service I would say...I think it means that they care about your welfare"*. Participants discussed the importance of a professional approach to customer interactions including staff behaviour and appearance. Pharmacy design influenced perceptions of privacy, including having sufficient space or a separate consultation room to promote confidential consultations with a pharmacist.

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3 Participants suggested that quality assurance is needed to improve quality and to inspire
4 confidence in the public “*it would drive up quality standards overall*” but suggested that
5
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7
8 quality ratings were unlikely to influence their use of specific pharmacies. They emphasised
9
10 the need for multi-dimensional quality ratings and for transparency with their derivation.
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15 Conclusions

16
17 The public conceptualise quality of community pharmacy services as multidimensional and
18 value relational aspects of care provided by personnel in this setting. Whilst the development
19 and application of quality indicators may drive improvement, it seems unlikely to influence
20 the public’s use of individual pharmacies.
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30 Article Summary

31
32 Strengths and Limitations – 5 bullets re methods, not results
33

- 34 • a diverse range of individuals participated in terms of age, sex, and country but not
35 ethnicity
36
- 37 • data collection was undertaken by one experienced health service researcher who was
38 also a pharmacist
39
- 40 • data analysis was undertaken by two experienced qualitative researchers neither of
41 whom were pharmacists. This ensured a balanced approach to the analysis and
42 interpretation of the data.
43
- 44 • all key recurring themes were identified with no new themes emerging in later
45 interviews or focus groups.
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INTRODUCTION

Each year in the United Kingdom (UK), an estimated 650,000 emergency department (ED) consultations and 18 million general practitioner (GP) consultations are for conditions (hereafter referred to as self-care consultations) that can be treated effectively by community pharmacy personnel, equating to around £1.1 billion in resources.[1, 2] In England, each of the 11699 community pharmacies [3] serves an average population of around 5600 citizens [4] of whom an estimated 89% are within 20 minutes' walk of a community pharmacy.[5] National policies and resources recommend the public to seek care from the most 'appropriate' provider.[6,7,8] Reassurance is needed regarding the quality of care provided in community pharmacies in general, and more specifically for self-care, which has been shown to vary, depending upon the criteria used.[9,10,11] Whilst national quality indicators for community pharmacy were introduced in England in 2017 [12], none refer to the management of self-care consultations despite this service being regarded the 'shop window' of community pharmacy.[13] As such, the study presented here is part of a research programme to co-produce quality indicators for self-care consultations.

The aim of this study was to conceptualise public perceptions and beliefs about the:

- quality of community pharmacy services in general
- management of self-care consultations
- measurement of the quality of community pharmacy services

METHODS

Study Design

Interviews and focus groups were conducted with members of the public with the method used varying according to participant availability and preference.

Recruitment, sampling, and consent

Participants were recruited through existing networks such as Health and Social Care Alliance Scotland,[14] as well as community groups and personal networks. Individuals were eligible to participate if they used community pharmacy services, and understood and were able to communicate in English. An email was sent to potential participants with information about the study, advising them to contact the research team if they wished to participate. Recruitment ceased once theoretical saturation was reached (i.e. when no new themes were emerging from the data). A maximum variation sample was recruited using a combination of purposive, convenience, and snowballing techniques.[15]

Data Collection

One female researcher (MW), who is a registered pharmacist with over 20 years' experience of health services research, undertook all data collection. Audio-recorded face-to-face or telephone interviews were conducted between August 2016 and July 2017, and lasted an average of 51 minutes (range 31 to 74 minutes). No other individuals were present during the interviews or focus groups. The topic (interview) guide was informed by existing work on quality and quality improvement, as well as a precedent interview study involving pharmacists.[13] It was not piloted prior to use but was modified throughout the data collection process to incorporate relevant topics identified in earlier interviews and focus

1
2
3 groups. This is consistent with an inductive approach in which theory emerges iteratively and
4
5 develops through the analysis of data. The concepts of “what matters to you”, “always
6
7 events” and “never events” were included.[13,16] Always events are “aspects of the patient
8
9 experience that are so important to patients and families that health care providers must aim
10
11 to perform them consistently and reliably for every patient, every time”.[17]
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18 Quality measurement was explored in general terms and more specifically in relation to the
19
20 use of rating or accreditation systems. The same topic guide was used for interviews and focus
21
22 groups. As new issues or themes emerged, they were included in subsequent
23
24 interviews/focus groups. All participants provided written consent to participate. On
25
26 completion of the interviews/focus groups, participants were offered a ‘thank you’ voucher
27
28 worth £20.
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35 **Data Analysis**

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37 Audio-recordings were transcribed verbatim by an experienced transcriber and accuracy
38
39 checked (KS/RW). The data were analysed systematically using Thematic Analysis.[18,19] The
40
41 focus of the analysis was to organise the data in a meaningful way according to the *a priori*
42
43 aims of the study, as well as to allow for the identification of topics and issues of importance
44
45 to participants. NVivo 11 (QSR International) was used to help organise, code and explore the
46
47 data. Two researchers (KS, RW) first familiarised themselves with the transcripts and coded
48
49 to broad topic areas (structuring codes). The next (extensive and iterative) phase involved the
50
51 identification of themes and sub-themes to reflect the research questions (a priori
52
53 codes/nodes) and from within the data itself (in vivo codes/nodes). As the analysis
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1
2
3 progressed, conceptual and crosscutting themes were identified and coded, in addition to
4 relevant topic codes.
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8 Each transcript was coded by one researcher (KS or RW), with most coded by two researchers
9 (KS, RW) to ensure reliability. The themes, their names and explanations were continually
10 refined through discussion between the researchers to ensure that they were distinct from
11 other themes, internally coherent and consistently applied. The coded data were explored
12 through queries and other NVivo tools, and themes were mapped to identify connections.
13
14 Once coding was complete, a Framework approach [20] was used to support the systematic
15 analysis of data around the research questions, to enable an assessment of prevalence and
16 coverage of key themes (i.e. dimensions of quality). Further interpretation and discussion, to
17 ensure that analytical claims were congruent with the extracts, culminated in the creation of
18 a thematic resource document. This reported all the relevant coded data under overarching
19 themes/headings, with some extracts being duplicated under two or more themes (e.g. in the
20 case of richness or complexity). This study is reported in accordance with COREQ [21].
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40 **Consent and Ethical Review**

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42 The University of Aberdeen College Ethics Review Board provided ethical review and approval
43 for the study (CERB/2015/6/1208).
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49 **PATIENT AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT STATEMENT**

50
51 We did not involve PPI representatives in the development of the research questions and
52 outcome measures or in the design of the study. However, patients and the public were
53 recruited through: the Scottish Patient Alliance; two participants in England were recruited
54 through patient and public involvement (PPI) groups; and the English and Welsh focus group
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1
2
3 participants were recruited through professional contacts of the researchers. Study results
4
5 will be disseminated to all participants who expressed an interest in being informed of the
6
7 results using a plain language summary that will be sent via email or in the post. All
8
9 participants were thanked in the acknowledgements.
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For peer review only

RESULTS

In total, 20 individuals participated (Scotland (n=7) all interviewed individually; England (one focus group (n=4) and four individual interviews (one of which was face-to-face)); and Wales (one focus group (n=5)) (Table 1). The majority were British and female. Four participants had been employed previously in health-related employment (none reported pharmacy-related employment although one male sometimes worked as a delivery driver for a local pharmacy). The focus group in England comprised four women in their 30s, all parents of young children. The focus group in Wales comprised three women in their 40s and 50s who were all mothers, and two graduate students in their 20s. All seven participants in Scotland were recruited through the Scottish Patient Alliance, two participants in England were recruited through patient and public involvement (PPI) groups, and the English and Welsh focus group participants were recruited through professional contacts of the researchers (MW, RW).

Table 1 Participant characteristics

Identifier	Country	Ethnicity	M/F	Range	Healthcare background
I1	Scotland	White Scottish	F	50-59	NS
I2	Scotland	Irish	F	60-69	Yes (retired)
I3	Scotland	White Scottish	F	40-49	NS
I4	Scotland	White Scottish	F	20-29	No
I5	Scotland	White British	F	50-59	NS
I6	Scotland	White	M	70-79	No
I7	Scotland	British	M	70-79	Yes
I8	England	White British	F	70-79	Yes
I9	England	White British	M	60-69	No
I10	England	British	M	70-79	No
I11	England	White	F	50-59	No
F1_1	England	British	F	30-39	No
F1_2	England	British	F	30-39	No
F1_3	England	White British	F	30-39	No
F1_4	England	British	F	30-39	No
F2_1	Wales	British	F	50-59	No
F2_2	Wales	White European	F	20-29	No
F2_3	Wales	White British	M	20-29	No
F2_4	Wales	NS	F	40-49	No
F2_5	Wales	White British	F	40-49	Yes

I Interview F Focus Group NS Not stated

Dimensions of Quality: The three P's.

When asked “*what matters to you*”, participants conceptualised the quality of community pharmacies as multi-dimensional and inter-related with three over-arching themes: person-centeredness; professionalism; and privacy. Selected quotes are presented to illustrate these dimensions and themes (Identifiers I and F denote interview and focus group participants, respectively).

1
2
3 Person-centeredness
4

5 Participants emphasised the importance of relational aspects with pharmacy personnel
6 including the need for a “friendly” caring service, continuity of care, and the staff ‘knowing’,
7
8 the individual, including awareness of their health conditions.
9
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14

15 *I4: The staff are really friendly, and helpful, ... , it's quite a personal service I would*
16 *say...I think it means that they care about your welfare.*
17

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20
21
22 *I8: I like continuity... It makes me feel safer, and um...it's like your doctor, you want*
23 *your doctor to know you.. it's nice to think that this person knows you and might*
24 *actually take an interest in you as opposed to you're just the next customer.*
25
26
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31

32 They generally wanted easy access to a pharmacist and pharmacies in terms of geographical
33 proximity and location, as well as opening hours, which suited their needs and lifestyle, and
34 suitable parking or access by public transport. However, others were willing to travel further
35 for specific medication needs, or a better service.
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45 Some also wanted the pharmacist to be visible and accessible in the pharmacy.
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50 *I9: ..direct access, easy access to the pharmacist (...) because there are some*
51 *pharmacists [sic] you go to where the registered pharmacists is like someone hiding*
52 *behind...a curtain and you don't see them.*
53
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1
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3 *F1_1: They [counter staff] are the gatekeepers aren't they? ..the pharmacist is in the*
4 *back, somewhere you know? It does feel like you have to have something really*
5 *legitimate to speak to them rather than them being available to speak to you (...). I*
6 *don't know the rules. I would like to know the answer to that – when am I entitled to*
7 *speak to the pharmacist?*
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17 Interviewees felt that staff should take time to listen and communicate clearly, involve people
18 in decisions around their own treatment, be responsive to personal requirements and
19 preferences, and be respectful of individual concerns.
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26

27 *I10: [there should always be] a feeling that the person you are talking to has time for*
28 *you obviously. If you have the feeling that you are being a nuisance then you would be*
29 *reluctant to ask a second time.*
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37 Professionalism

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39 Participants discussed the importance of a professional approach in customer interactions
40 including staff behaviour and appearance. Although not all expected staff to wear a uniform,
41 it was commonly felt that they should be identifiable, for example, by wearing name badges.
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49 *I11: The staff would look clean and smart and presentable and the name badge*
50 *confirming that they are not just Saturday girls, they are kind of trained professionals.*
51
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53
54
55

56 *F1_2: I guess maybe for them to tell you who they are - introduce themselves. 'I am a*
57 *pharmacist' or - so that you know exactly who you're dealing with.*
58
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1
2
3 People expected staff (including, but not only, pharmacists) to be competent, suitably trained,
4
5 qualified and confident in their ability to diagnose, advise and prescribe, and for all staff to be
6
7 knowledgeable about over-the-counter (OTC) medication (i.e. medicines, which can be
8
9 sold/bought without the need for a prescription), and be able to provide (cheaper)
10
11 alternatives.
12
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18 *F2_3: If they are still uncertain they should always refer you back to your GP .*
19
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21

22
23 *F1_3: I don't know if it was the pharmacist or the pharmacy assistant to be honest*
24
25 *but she basically advised me to take a slightly cheaper model of the medicine... .. And*
26
27 *I really appreciated it, that's a nice thing to do.*
28
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30
31

32 Counter staff were expected to defer to the pharmacist if necessary, who should then refer
33
34 onward as appropriate, but not be overly risk averse (a frustration for parents of young
35
36 children).
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41

42 *F1_2: [I] went a few times when [name of child] was younger and then because I just*
43
44 *kept getting...'I don't know what's wrong with him, he's got like a bit of a rash, or*
45
46 *something, is there anything you can give me?' and they were like 'oh we wouldn't*
47
48 *like to say just go and see the GP'. Now .. I will go straight to the GP ..because ..they*
49
50 *don't ever seem keen to actually sort of [sic] not diagnose.*
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3 Participants felt it was important that a pharmacy felt clean, light and “hygienic”. It was felt
4
5 that a good quality pharmacy should have sufficient medication stock so that prescriptions
6
7 could be fully filled, in a timely manner, to avoid return visits.
8
9

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11
12
13 *I6: it's got to be how quickly you receive whatever medicine or treatment you need ...*
14
15 *that's the most important thing.*
16
17

20 Privacy

21
22 Privacy was an important consideration, and included physical characteristics of the
23
24 pharmacy in supporting privacy, with either a separate consultation room or a dedicated
25
26 private area, and the need to have confidential conversations with the pharmacist.
27
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31
32 *I2: private consultation room that's accessible. Not at the back of the shop (...) I don't*
33
34 *think there should be over the counter consultations at the same section where people*
35
36 *are coming to buy their cosmetics or whatever or pick up their prescriptions.. it should*
37
38 *be separate, in fact go into [supermarket pharmacy] you've got to queue up with*
39
40 *everybody that's wanting their fags, or wants a lottery ticket.*
41
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46
47 Privacy was interwoven with confidentiality, which in turn, influenced confidence and trust in
48
49 pharmacy personnel.
50
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53
54 *I11: ..they reassure you ..().you that it is a private consultation maybe and that your*
55
56 *data is protected as a minimum I suppose.*
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1
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3 *I5: We do have a village pharmacy, but because of the lack of confidentiality I am now*
4 *taking myself a 52 mile round trip to get a prescription.() It matters that I feel*
5 *confident in the service that I'm being given, that I'm confident in the fact that my*
6 *information is being kept confidential, and that the fact is that the pharmacists on the*
7 *whole genuinely are trying to do their best by patients.*

17 **Measuring Quality in Community Pharmacies**

18
19
20 Participants were asked whether the quality of community pharmacies should be measured
21 and if so, what measures to use. Participants suggested that quality assurance is needed to
22 improve quality as well as to inspire confidence in the public.

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30 *I5: ..the only way you're going to know that you're going to get a good service is to*
31 *actually publish the fact that you are getting a good service. It's like in hospital wards*
32 *for cleanliness, now they're putting up figures showing that they've managed to*
33 *eliminate for the last 100 days - they've had no MRSA - that gives confidence to*
34 *patients when they read that and see these facts and figures. And they're put out there*
35 *for everybody to see not just the few, that's important.(...) .it would be about saying to*
36 *the good pharmacists 'well done you're getting it right every time'. But it's also saying*
37 *to the other ones 'you need to pull your socks up'.*

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52 There was recognition that quality could be difficult to measure across varied services and
53 discussion of which criteria to use.
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3 *F2_4: How effective was the information or how accurate was the information you*
4 *received, did it work for you, was it right or was it wrong or, how satisfied were you on*
5 *what you were told, and I think that's it in a nutshell really.(...)*
6
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10
11
12 Suggested methods of quality measurement included: customer satisfaction surveys/instant
13 feedback; audit; mystery shoppers; and the use of professional standards. The use of rating
14 systems was explored specifically. Participants identified similar systems associated with
15 other aspects of life, including: shopping (Amazon); travel (Trip Advisor); restaurants (food
16 hygiene ratings); health (hospital wards); and education services (Ofsted (Office for Standards
17 in Education)). Many participants expressed broadly positive attitudes towards rating
18 systems, whilst others questioned their usefulness based upon the use of similar systems
19 applied to other areas e.g. education. The relevance of these systems to community
20 pharmacies was also questioned due to the more complex, less “transactional” element of
21 service/customer interaction.
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39

40 *I9: There are ratings systems for things that - where a service can damage the public.*
41 *..(.. we already have food safety ratings for cafes and restaurants. One might ask why*
42 *we don't have one for something where the service could kill you more effectively, or*
43 *more easily..(.. you can tell a reasonable restaurant or cafe from your first consumer*
44 *experience, you won't necessarily know a really good pharmacy from a less than good*
45 *pharmacy.*
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56
57 Participants described potential positive, negative and unintended consequences of a star-
58 type rating system for reporting quality.
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1
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3 *I4: I think it would drive up quality standards overall. Yeah, I think it would be a good*
4 *measure. If chemists know that they're being rated they obviously wouldn't want a bad*
5 *rating.*
6
7
8
9

10
11
12
13 *I8: .. I realise how frightened people are of their health...so I think if they went into a*
14 *chemist shop and saw that maybe it only had 3 and room for improvement, I think*
15 *they'd [the public] get nervous about that. So yes, there can be a rating but I don't*
16 *think it really needs to be displayed when it comes to health.*
17
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25 Some participants considered rating systems to be too subjective.
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30 *F2_1: .. if it was general public rating then I'd be a bit sceptical but if it came from a*
31 *professional going in and give it an accredited, like the scores on the door, like it comes*
32 *from a governing body ... then I would have more tendency to go with what they said,*
33 *.. a non-biased organisation .. and you were judged (...) Maybe give it different*
34 *categories, maybe the customer service side ask the general public, but as far as the*
35 *professional - the accuracy of what was given out and the way everything was kept -*
36 *leave that part to the professionals because I wouldn't be anyone to judge.*
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50 Most participants stated that they would take notice of star ratings if they existed, but
51 wouldn't necessarily base their choice of pharmacy upon them. Some preferred to make their
52 own judgement. For most, the decision to use a particular pharmacy was contingent on a
53 number of, potentially overlapping, factors including accessibility, personal needs, time
54 available and perceived urgency. Given that most also expressed general satisfaction with
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3 the pharmacy they used, and some had no realistic choice of using another, there was some
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5 scepticism around the value of a star ratings type system in terms of what it might be based
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7 on and how it would be used.
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13 *F2_2: It wouldn't affect my choice of the pharmacy unless it was maybe a one star out*
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15 *of five then I'd be like well 'what's going on here like why' but if it was four or three I'd*
16
17 *probably wouldn't care because I probably wouldn't understand what the rating is*
18
19 *based on, who gave this rating to this particular pharmacy. I mean in restaurants I*
20
21 *know that if the hygiene -so I can imagine what it means - but in a pharmacy, but is it*
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23 *the customer service, is it the way they organise their medicines, I'd probably just base*
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25 *my choice - based on my experience.*
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32 **DISCUSSION**

33 **Statement of Principal Findings**

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40 Quality was conceptualised as multi-dimensional with inter-related overarching themes of
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42 person-centeredness, professionalism, and privacy. The importance of relational aspects
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44 with pharmacy personnel was emphasised. Participants valued a professional approach
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46 including staff behaviour and appearance. Pharmacy design influenced perceptions of
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48 privacy, including having sufficient space or a separate consultation room to promote private
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50 and confidential consultations with a pharmacist.
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57 Participants suggested that quality assurance would “drive up quality standards overall” and
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59 inspire confidence in the public, but they intimated that quality ratings were unlikely to
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3 influence their use of specific pharmacies. They emphasised the need for multi-dimensional
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5 quality ratings and for transparency with their derivation.
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10 **Strengths and Weaknesses**

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12 We included a diverse range of participants in terms of country, sex, and age, but not
13
14 ethnicity. We were satisfied that our sample size was appropriate in terms of answering our
15
16 research questions relating to the conceptualisation of quality and its measurement.[22] One
17
18 experienced health service researcher, who was also a pharmacist (MW), undertook all data
19
20 collection. She did not disclose her pharmacist background unless specifically asked. The
21
22 breadth and depth of topics covered suggests that participants felt empowered to participate
23
24 and share positive and negative experiences of community pharmacy use. Data analysis was
25
26 undertaken by two experienced qualitative researchers (KS, female and RW, male) neither of
27
28 whom were pharmacists. This ensured a balanced approach to the analysis and
29
30 interpretation of the data. Our interpretive analysis explored participants' understanding and
31
32 sense-making of their experiences of pharmacy services. We are confident that all key
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34 recurring themes were identified with no new themes emerging in the later interviews or
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36 focus groups.
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47 **Important Differences in the results**

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49 None of the major themes derived from our study are reflected in the national quality
50
51 indicators. This is perhaps unsurprising given that there was no patient and public
52
53 involvement (PPI) with indicator development. To date, there has been minimal PPI in the
54
55 development of the few existing quality indicators for community pharmacy
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57 services.[23,24,25] There has, however, been limited exploration of the likely influence of
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3 quality ratings on patient behaviour. Our participants anticipated that quality indicators
4
5 would have little effect on their use of pharmacies, reflecting the results of two US studies
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7 that concurred that patients would only consider indicators if they were seeking a community
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9 pharmacy in a new area[26,27].
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15 **Meaning of the study**

16
17 Our results show that the public value relational aspects of care i.e. personnel who are
18
19 friendly and approachable, and reflect a recent UK-wide survey of over 1000 members of the
20
21 public and their preferences for attributes of community pharmacies when seeking care for
22
23 minor ailments (aka self-care consultations).[28] As with these survey respondents, our
24
25 participants also prioritised ease of access and convenience as important attributes.
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32 **Implications for clinicians and policymakers; and unanswered questions and future** 33 **research.**

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35 Future quality indicators should involve stakeholders, particularly patients and public, as the
36
37 main users of community pharmacy. Despite a possible lack of effect on care-seeking
38
39 behaviour, the use of co-produced indicators *could* be used to drive quality improvement
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41 within and between community pharmacies.
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50 **CONCLUSION**

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52 The public conceptualise quality of community pharmacy services as multidimensional and
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54 they value relational aspects of care provided by personnel in this setting. Whilst the
55
56 development and application of quality indicators may drive improvement, it seems unlikely
57
58 that they would influence the public's use of individual pharmacies.
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We thank all the members of the public who participated in interviews and focus groups as well as the organisations and individuals who facilitated recruitment of participants for this study.

FUNDING

This work was supported by the Health Foundation with Professor Watson's Improvement Science Fellowship.

COMPETING INTERESTS

None declared.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

MW led the scientific development and interpretation of the study, conducted most of the data collection, and led manuscript production and revisions.

KS advised on and developed analytical tools and frameworks, and contributed towards data analysis and interpretation, manuscript production and revisions.

RW contributed towards data analysis and interpretation, manuscript production and revisions.

DATA SHARING

No additional data are available. All data related to this study are included in this submission, either in tables in the manuscript or in supplementary files.

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For peer review only

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Manuscript: How does the public conceptualise the quality of care and its measurement in community pharmacies in the United Kingdom?: A qualitative interview study

Consolidated criteria for reporting qualitative studies (COREQ): 32-item checklist

Developed from:

Tong A, Sainsbury P, Craig J. Consolidated criteria for reporting qualitative research (COREQ): a 32-item checklist for interviews and focus groups. *International Journal for Quality in Health Care*. 2007. Volume 19, Number 6: pp. 349 – 357

No. Item	Guide questions/description		Reported on Page #
Domain 1: Research team and reflexivity			
<i>Personal Characteristics</i>			
1. Interviewer/facilitator	Which author/s conducted the interview or focus group?	MW	4,6,19
2. Credentials	What were the researcher's credentials? E.g. PhD, MD	PhD	1
3. Occupation	What was their occupation at the time of the study?	Professor, Department of Pharmacy and Pharmacology	1
4. Gender	Was the researcher male or female?	Female	6
5. Experience and training	What experience or training did the researcher have?	Over 20 years' experience of health services research.	6
<i>Relationship with participants</i>			
6. Relationship established	Was a relationship established prior to study commencement?	No	-
7. Participant knowledge of the interviewer	What did the participants know about the researcher? e.g. personal goals, reasons for doing the research	Participants were briefed on the purpose of the study and understood that it was a research project being undertaken by MW. Ethical approval had	6,7

		been granted, participants reviewed the participant information documentation prior to giving their written informed consent.	
8. Interviewer characteristics	What characteristics were reported about the interviewer/facilitator? e.g. Bias, assumptions, reasons and interests in the research topic	MW is a registered pharmacist, which was a potential source of bias. However, MW did not disclose her background unless specifically asked. No other interviewer-related biases were identified.	19
Domain 2: study design			
<i>Theoretical framework</i>			
9. Methodological orientation and Theory	What methodological orientation was stated to underpin the study? e.g. grounded theory, discourse analysis, ethnography, phenomenology, content analysis	Open coding with thematic analysis followed by a framework approach to support the systematic analysis of data around the research questions.	7-8
<i>Participant selection</i>			
10. Sampling	How were participants selected? e.g. purposive, convenience, consecutive, snowball	Recruited via email using existing research networks, community groups, and personal networks. A maximum variation sample was recruited using a combination of purposive,	6

		convenience, and snowballing techniques.	
11. Method of approach	How were participants approached? e.g. face-to-face, telephone, mail, email	Email	6
12. Sample size	How many participants were in the study?	20	9
13. Non-participation	How many people refused to participate or dropped out? Reasons?	No participants who agreed to take part in the study subsequently refused to participate, withdrew their consent, or dropped out.	-
<i>Setting</i>			
14. Setting of data collection	Where was the data collected? e.g. home, clinic, workplace	Data were collected via telephone or face-to-face in a non-clinical setting.	6
15. Presence of non-participants	Was anyone else present besides the participants and researchers?	No.	6
16. Description of sample	What are the important characteristics of the sample? e.g. demographic data, date	Age range 20-79; 5 males, 15 females. Data was collected between August 2016 and July 2017.	6, 10 (Table 1)
<i>Data collection</i>			
17. Interview guide	Were questions, prompts, guides provided by the authors? Was it pilot tested?	Interviews / focus groups were semi-structured using a topic guide. It was not piloted, but was modified throughout the data collection process to incorporate relevant topics identified in earlier interviews	6-7

		and focus groups.	
18. Repeat interviews	Were repeat interviews carried out? If yes, how many?	No	-
19. Audio/visual recording	Did the research use audio or visual recording to collect the data?	Yes. Interviews / focus groups were recorded using an audio recorder.	6
20. Field notes	Were field notes made during and/or after the interview or focus group?	No additional notes were made.	-
21. Duration	What was the duration of the interviews or focus group?	The semi-structured interviews / focus groups lasted an average of 51 minutes (range 31 to 74 minutes).	6
22. Data saturation	Was data saturation discussed?	Yes. Recruitment ceased once theoretical saturation was reached (i.e. when no new themes were emerging from the data).	6
23. Transcripts returned	Were transcripts returned to participants for comment and/or correction?	No.	-
Domain 3: analysis and findings			
<i>Data analysis</i>			
24. Number of data coders	How many data coders coded the data?	Two.	7,8
25. Description of the coding tree	Did authors provide a description of the coding tree?	Coding described in methods section.	7-8
26. Derivation of themes	Were themes identified in advance or derived from the data?	Themes were derived from the data.	7-8
27. Software	What software, if applicable, was used to manage the data?	Nvivo.	7-8

28. Participant checking	Did participants provide feedback on the findings?	No.	-
<i>Reporting</i>			
29. Quotations presented	Were participant quotations presented to illustrate the themes/findings? Was each quotation identified? e.g. participant number	Yes, themes/findings were supported with direct quotes attributed to anonymised participants.	10-18
30. Data and findings consistent	Was there consistency between the data presented and the findings?	Yes.	10-18
31. Clarity of major themes	Were major themes clearly presented in the findings?	Yes.	10-18
32. Clarity of minor themes	Is there a description of diverse cases or discussion of minor themes?	No.	N/A