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What's new at the CPPE?

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Support for pharmacy technicians undertaking CPD is provided by the Centre for Pharmacy Postgraduate Education. This article describes some recent initiatives

Although there will be delays in bringing into force the provisions relating to technicians in the Pharmacy and Pharmacy Technicians Order 2007 (see news, p38), statutory continuing professional development for pharmacy technicians is still expected to become a reality in the near future.

Organisations such as the Centre for Pharmacy Postgraduate Education (CPPE) are in an ideal position to support pharmacy technicians' learning. This article describes some recent initiatives from the CPPE.

Supporting Skill Mix

Supporting Skill Mix is our pharmacy technician learning programme, launched last March. We are shaping this to contain a mix of programmes (including workshops, open learning, e-learning and small-group learning sessions), some for both pharmacists and technicians, and some just for technicians.

Pharmacy technicians have been among the attendees at local CPPE workshops held across England. More than 40 of the CPPE workshop topics are now delivered to pharmacists and pharmacy technicians together. Many more will soon be offered in this way.

Workshops specifically developed for pharmacy technicians include "Patients, medicines and the pharmacy technician — a guide to medication review." This uses examples of practice from community, primary care (including prisons) and hospital settings. Tutors will deliver these in 12 locations across England throughout early 2007.

So far, we have produced three open learning programmes specifically for technicians, including one on medication review to support the workshop described above. Some of our open learning programmes developed in the past to meet pharmacists' learning needs could be useful to hospital pharmacy technicians. These include:

- Dermatology
- Risk management — it's a risk
- Supporting care homes with medication management

Other open learning programmes, aimed at both pharmacists and pharmacy technicians, are in development, including one on musculoskeletal disorders.

The "learning@lunch" programme was designed specifically for pharmacists and pharmacy technicians working in hospitals to learn together in small groups. A previous article in *Hospital Pharmacist* (2006;13:93-4) outlines the scheme. Based on requests, the first three

learning@lunch modules are about cardiovascular disease — namely acute coronary syndromes, stable angina, and strategies for the primary and secondary prevention of cardiovascular disease. A module about smoking cessation is now available and modules on types 1 and 2 diabetes are being developed.

We are aware that some hospitals are finding it hard to allocate time for preparing and delivering learning@lunch. One way to solve this problem may be to rotate the role of facilitator to different pharmacists and pharmacy technicians. A facilitator guide accompanies every programme, and we believe that this should enable less experienced staff to facilitate sessions, with more experienced staff acting as mentors.

Collaborations

Last October saw the running of our pilot workshop "CPD — a pick and mix approach," in collaboration with the Association of Pharmacy Technicians UK. Advice about using both online and paper-based reporting was included, along with information about why pharmacy technicians are required to undertake CPD. Group working was used to explain each stage of the CPD process. We intend to run more of these workshops during 2007. Many of the CPPE tutors set to lead the workshops are trained Royal Pharmaceutical Society CPD facilitators and so have many practical examples to share with participants.

Three pharmacy technicians are part of our recently-formed Stakeholder and User Board, which met for the first time last December. Other board members include pharmacists and non-pharmacy professionals, including those with an interest in education. It is anticipated that this mix of people will enable us to take our learning initiatives forward in a way that is relevant to both pharmacists and pharmacy technicians.

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More information
Further information about the Centre for Pharmacy Postgraduate Education programmes is available from the CPPE website at www.cppe.manchester.ac.uk