

A national study exploring oral health promotion potential in Australian community pharmacies



Picture: The University of Queensland Investigators: from L to R, Dr Meng-Wong Taing (School of Pharmacy), Dr Christopher Freeman (School of Pharmacy) and Professor Pauline Ford (School of Dentistry).

Context

Community pharmacy staff are respected, trustworthy and knowledgeable healthcare professionals who provide numerous services to patients without charging any fees, do not require appointments for consultations and are usually in close proximity to people's homes. For many, pharmacists and pharmacy assistants are the first or only contact with a health professional about a health concern and are therefore ideally positioned to deliver preventive oral health messages/early interventions.

Project Objectives

Part A: Investigate in disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged communities, current pharmacy staff oral healthcare practices, barriers, interest and support needed to enhance their role within oral healthcare. This project also assessed pharmacy staff willingness to incorporate prevention and early intervention programs within community pharmacies.

Part B: Assess staff knowledge with regards to managing common oral health issues (e.g. tooth decay, tooth pain, gum disease, oral cancer and oral trauma) within the Australian community.
Significance of this project for the community

Outcomes

The survey was successfully administered across Australian community pharmacies. Results for **Part A** of this study have been published in BMJ Open. link:

<http://bmjopen.bmj.com/cgi/content/full/bmjopen-2017-017940?ijkey=8pVIYlxwYKN3N2c&keytype=ref>

Results for **Part B** of this study are currently being analysed and will be published.

Future projects include:

- Development and piloting of educational packages with pharmacy staff in face-to-face workshops;
- Deployment and assessment of on-line education modules (via learning assessment) for pharmacy staff and;
- Development of prevention and early intervention programs in community pharmacies. Efficacy of these interventions to prevent caries or improve oral health outcomes will be assessed.

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