

Pharmacist Travel Medicine Services and educational needs: a qualitative study of pharmacists' perspectives in London, UK

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Background

Travel medicine services delivered by community pharmacists have been increasing over the last ten years in the UK, in part resulting from changes in legislation that allow pharmacists to administer vaccines under protocols (Patient Group Directions, PGDs) or as independent prescribers. The aim of the study was to explore, using qualitative methods, the ways in which the pharmacists' perceived delivery of their services and educational needs.

Methods

Community Pharmacists in the London area providing Travel medicine services were invited to participate, 60 volunteered and 10 were selected to take part in a 45-minute 1-1 zoom interview. A further 2-hour focus group of 6 pharmacists from different backgrounds was also held via Zoom

Results

A major finding was that the pharmacists' perceived and delivered the travel health clinics as primarily a vaccination service. They expressed general satisfaction with the education given by the providers of the PGDs, which were delivered by e-learning and focused on travel vaccines. However, they viewed a risk assessment and management plan to be primarily based upon suitability to receive appropriate vaccinations.

Conclusion

Further educational requirements include training in conducting a more holistic risk assessment, with a focus on travel health issues other than immunisation.