

Feasibility of Using Community Pharmacies to Increase Participation Among Unscreened or Under-Screened Women

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Background and Literature Review:

Cancer is the leading cause of disease burden in Australia.^{1,2,3} There are national screening programs for bowel cancer and breast cancer, which are effective at reducing cancer mortality.^{1,4,5} However, participation in these programs is only moderate.¹

Because of their accessibility, community pharmacies are one setting where bowel and breast cancer screening may be promoted.

Objective:

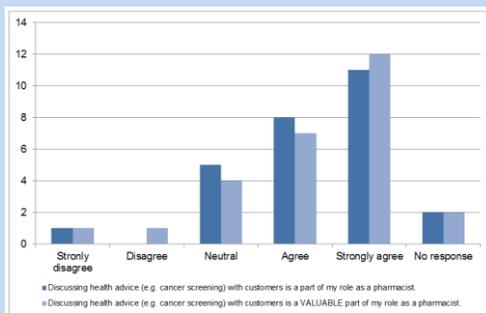
- To identify the feasibility of the promotion and education of cancer screening in community pharmacies

Methods:

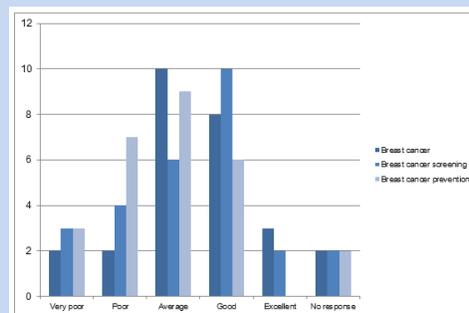
- Mixed-methods, exploratory research
- Electronic survey** to 27 pharmacists
- In-depth, semi-structured interviews** with 3 key informants and 5 community pharmacists
- Metro South Health region of Brisbane, QLD

Results:

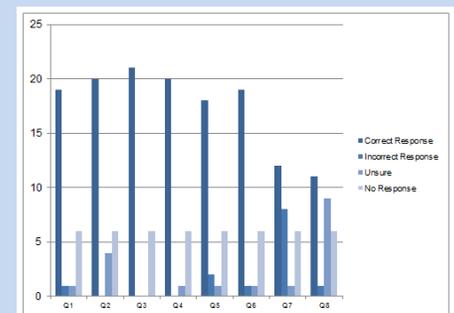
- Pharmacists** perceive they have a vital, valuable role in promoting cancer screening
- Pharmacists** have moderate levels of confidence and knowledge in promoting cancer screening



Graph 1. Pharmacists' perceptions of their role discussing health advice with their customers



Graph 2. Pharmacists' confidence in discussing breast cancer topics with their customers



Graph 3. Pharmacists' knowledge about key bowel and breast cancer topics

- Key informants** perceived communities would support the promotion of cancer screening in pharmacies
- Enablers:** pharmacies are accessible; pharmacists have trusting relationships with communities; training of pharmacy staff, advertisement of screening, service collaboration and financial incentives are essential
- Barriers:** uncertainty about level of community engagement; paucity of time, funding and privacy in pharmacies; lack of client anonymity and follow-up; community's poor health literacy; difficulties discussing cancer; complexities related to the complex broader context of community pharmacies in Australia (e.g. competition)

Promoting cancer screening in community pharmacies is feasible – provided the barriers perceived by pharmacists and key informants are addressed.

Funding and Ethics:

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Ethical approval for this research was obtained from the Metro South Health Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC/16/QPAC/123).

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