



Publication title:

[When procedures meet practice in community pharmacies: qualitative insights from pharmacists and pharmacy support staff](#)

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Thomas CEL, Phipps DL, Ashcroft DM. When procedures meet practice in community pharmacies: qualitative insights from pharmacists and pharmacy support staff. *BMJ Open*. 2016;6(6): e010851.

What was known before your paper was published?

Procedures are official or established ways of doing things. They are used in many industries such as rail and aviation, oil and gas and healthcare settings. We knew that standardised procedures are a common method for trying to ensure that staff members work safely, however the presence of procedures does not always guarantee that they are followed. Previous research has shown that sometimes staff will deviate from procedures as part of their work for a range of reasons. We wanted to know more about how this happens in community pharmacy settings as up until now there has been very little research into procedural compliance in this setting.

What did you do?

We interviewed 13 pharmacists and 11 pharmacy support staff from a range of different community pharmacies. During the interview, we asked participants a range of questions to understand how procedures influenced their work. The interview included questions such as 'what kind of procedures do you have to follow in community pharmacy?', 'how useful are the procedures for helping you to do your job?' and 'how do you feel procedures benefit you in your work?'

What did you find?

We found that community pharmacy staff members are expected to follow a large number of procedures as part of their work. At times, staff felt that it was impossible to follow all procedures fully. There were many factors that at times made following procedures difficult, including a high workload, a lack of staff, poor communication and a pressure to hit targets. Staff also spoke about bypassing or deviating from procedures to ensure that tailored patient care was provided. This study supports the need for pharmacists to be able to use their professional judgement when deciding if it is appropriate to bypass or deviate from procedures for patient safety.

What insights/knowledge did you add?

We found that community pharmacy staff members display 'organisational resilience' (the ability to react to changing situations accordingly in order to maintain high performance). We also highlighted the impact of factors such as a high workload and a lack of staff can have on the ability of staff to follow procedures. These findings should help to inform policy makers about how they can best support staff in their work and in maintaining safe and effective patient care.

The paper has been published in BMJ Open and is freely available to read:

<http://bmjopenbeta.bmj.com/content/6/6/e010851>