



Community Pharmacists' Attitudes Towards Engaging in the Physical Healthcare of Patients on Methadone Maintenance treatment



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INTRODUCTION

- ❖ Illicit drug use and related disorders are associated with substantial morbidity globally. It accounts for 7.4% (6.2- 8.6) of all disability adjusted life years and was the leading cause of years lived in disabilities (YLD) worldwide in 2010.
- ❖ Methadone Maintenance Treatment (MMT) is one of the major pharmacological interventions and a treatment option used as opiate detoxification in drug misuse, administered under pharmacists' supervision in community pharmacies.
- ❖ This frequent daily contact with patients on MMT by pharmacists offers the opportunity for an increased contribution towards their physical health

OBJECTIVES

This study was aimed at exploring community pharmacists' perception of their role, current level of involvement and attitudes towards the physical health of patients on methadone maintenance treatment. Specific objectives of this research study includes:

- ❖ To explore the attitudes of community pharmacists towards the physical health of patients on MMT
- ❖ To examine the types of physical healthcare intervention provided by community pharmacists to patients on MMT and their levels of involvement
- ❖ To identify facilitations and hindrances to the provision of an optimal physical healthcare by community pharmacists to patients on MMT
- ❖ To understand why some community pharmacists do not engage in the physical health of patients to whom they dispense MMT
- ❖ To describe the views of community pharmacists regarding appropriate involvement in the physical health of patients on MMT and to identify factors that can improve the provision of the aforementioned intervention

METHODS

- ❖ A mixed mode cross-sectional survey that incorporated both structured quantitative and phenomenological data collection was conducted.
- ❖ A hundred pharmacists licensed to practice in the United Kingdom were randomly selected from different community pharmacies in the London borough of Newham, East London.
- ❖ Qualitative data were thematically analyzed using the hybrid approach while Statistical Package for the Social Sciences(SPSS) was used to analyze quantitative data.

RESULTS

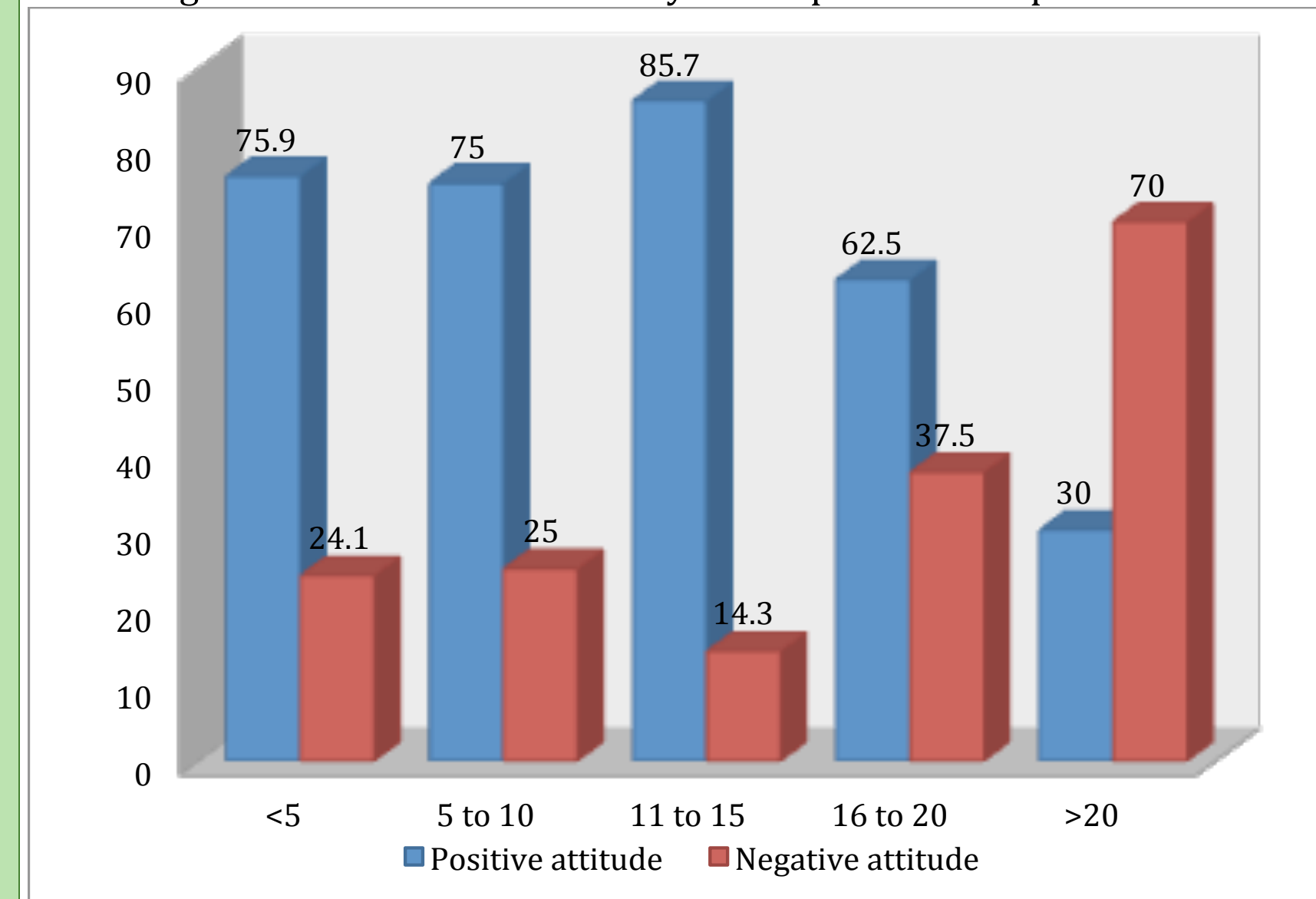
- ❖ A response rate of 82% was achieved. Majority of the respondents (67.1%) displayed high level of physical health care intervention.
- ❖ Knowledge in major health issues confronting patients on MMT (O.R=4.778,95%C.I=1.671-13.665, $p=.004$) and age-group (O.R=1.455, 95%C.I=1.007,2.103, $p=.032$) were significantly associated with the level of physical health care intervention.
- ❖ In addition, years of practice (O.R=1.514, 95%C.I=1.070,2.143, $p=.019$), age-group (O.R=1.553, 95%C.I=1.107,2.177, $p=.011$) and service-provision (O.R=7.8,95%C.I=2.301,26.444, $p<.0001$) were identified as predictors of community pharmacists' attitudes.
- ❖ Barriers to engagement identified from the structured interview include lack of privacy, training, job description and unpredictable behavior of patients on MMT. Identified facilitations to service provision includes job satisfaction, positive responses from patients on MMT and cost effectiveness of service provision in the long term.

Multiple logistic regression to identify predictors of community pharmacists' level of healthcare intervention provided to patients on methadone maintenance treatment

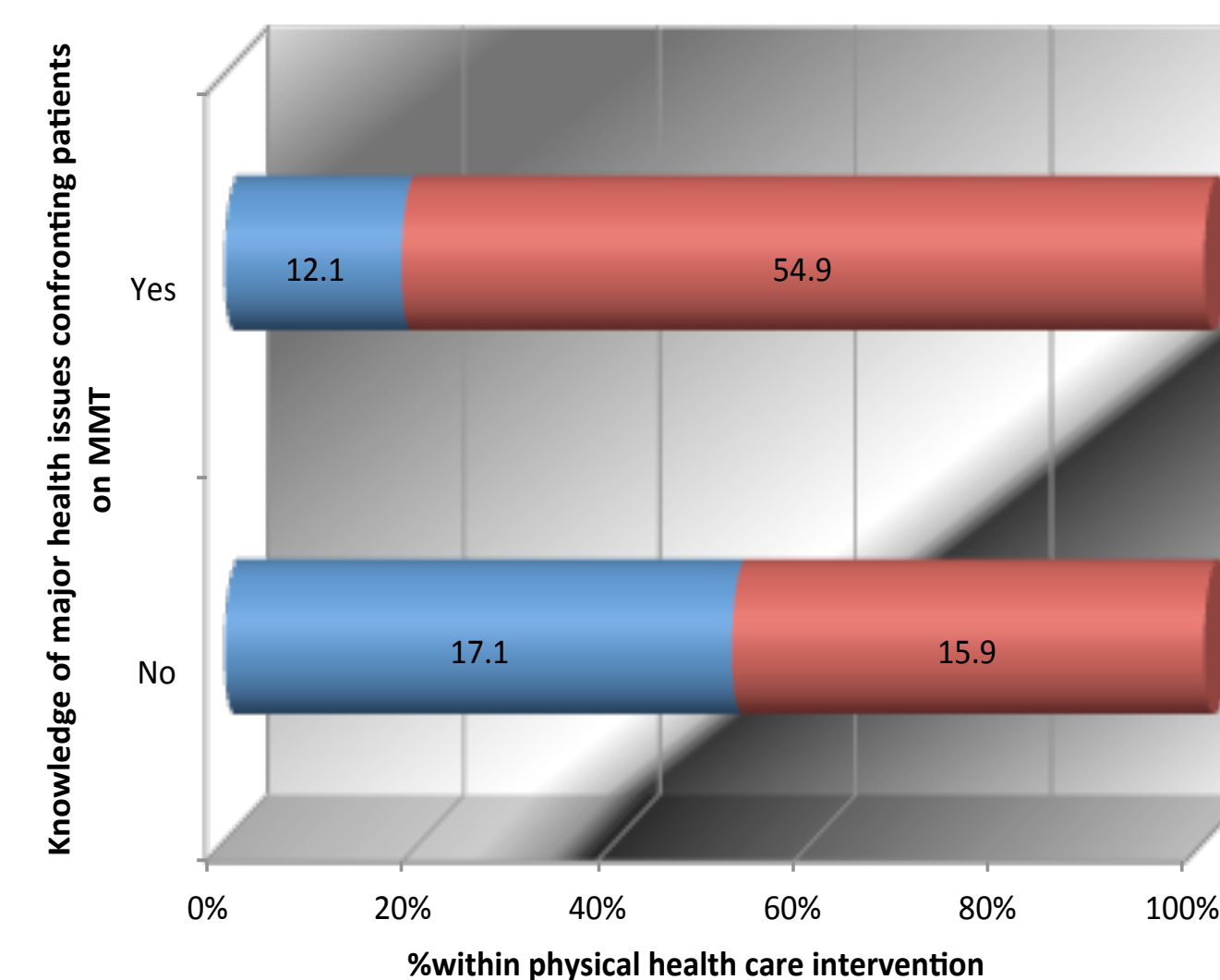
Independent Variables	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)	95.0% C.I. for EXP (B)	
							Lower	Upper
KOMHI (1)	1.564	0.536	8.512	1	0.004	4.778	1.671	13.665
AGEGRP	0.375	0.188	3.980	1	0.046	1.455	1.007	2.103
Constant	-1.459	0.709	4.240	1	0.039	0.232		

a Variable(s) entered on step 2: AGEGRP CI: Confidence Interval EXP(B): Odds ratio
KOMHI: Knowledge of major health issues confronting patients on MMT
AGEGRP: Age group of community pharmacists

Percentage within attitude scores for years of practice as a pharmacist



Percentage within physical healthcare intervention in two categories for knowledge of major health issues confronting patients on methadone maintenance treatment



DISCUSSION

The findings of this study reiterate the need to revise pharmacists' expanded scope of practice and improve organizational support for community pharmacists that engage in pharmacological treatments for opioid detoxification so as to optimize their role in preventing drug misuse in primary care.

IMPLICATIONS FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

- ❖ The findings of this study identified the needs for older community pharmacists and pharmacists that have been practicing for more than 20years to be physical health oriented towards patients on MMT.
- ❖ A continuing professional development program based on the health needs of patients on MMT should be introduced and targeted more on these individuals. Furthermore, improvement of skills and update in knowledge through trainings should be conducted periodically.
- ❖ Since undergraduate trainings on opioid dependence and physical healthcare intervention is not sufficient to provide adequate base for service provision, essential courses should be introduced into the curriculum of undergraduate pharmacists by schools of pharmacy.

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