

Factors that influence pharmacists' capabilities to utilise clinical skills in their day-to-day clinical practice in Scotland following completion of a clinical skills training programme

Authors: Ms. Ailsa MacDonald, NHS Education for Scotland, Dr Lynn Welsh, NHS Scotland Academy, Dr Dhruva Somasundara, University of Dundee School of Medicine

Introduction/Aim

The National Clinical Skills for Pharmacists Programme (NCSPP) delivered in partnership by the University of Dundee (UoD), NHS Education Scotland (NES) and NHS Scotland Academy (NHSSA) has been developed to increase clinical skills assessment and increase pharmacist independent prescribing (IP) in line with Scottish Government (SG) frameworks (NHSD 2025). The programme was examined using a qualitative case study approach. The aim was to identify the extent completion of the NCSPP influences the utilisation of clinical skills by pharmacists working in Scotland within their day-to-day clinical practice.

Methods

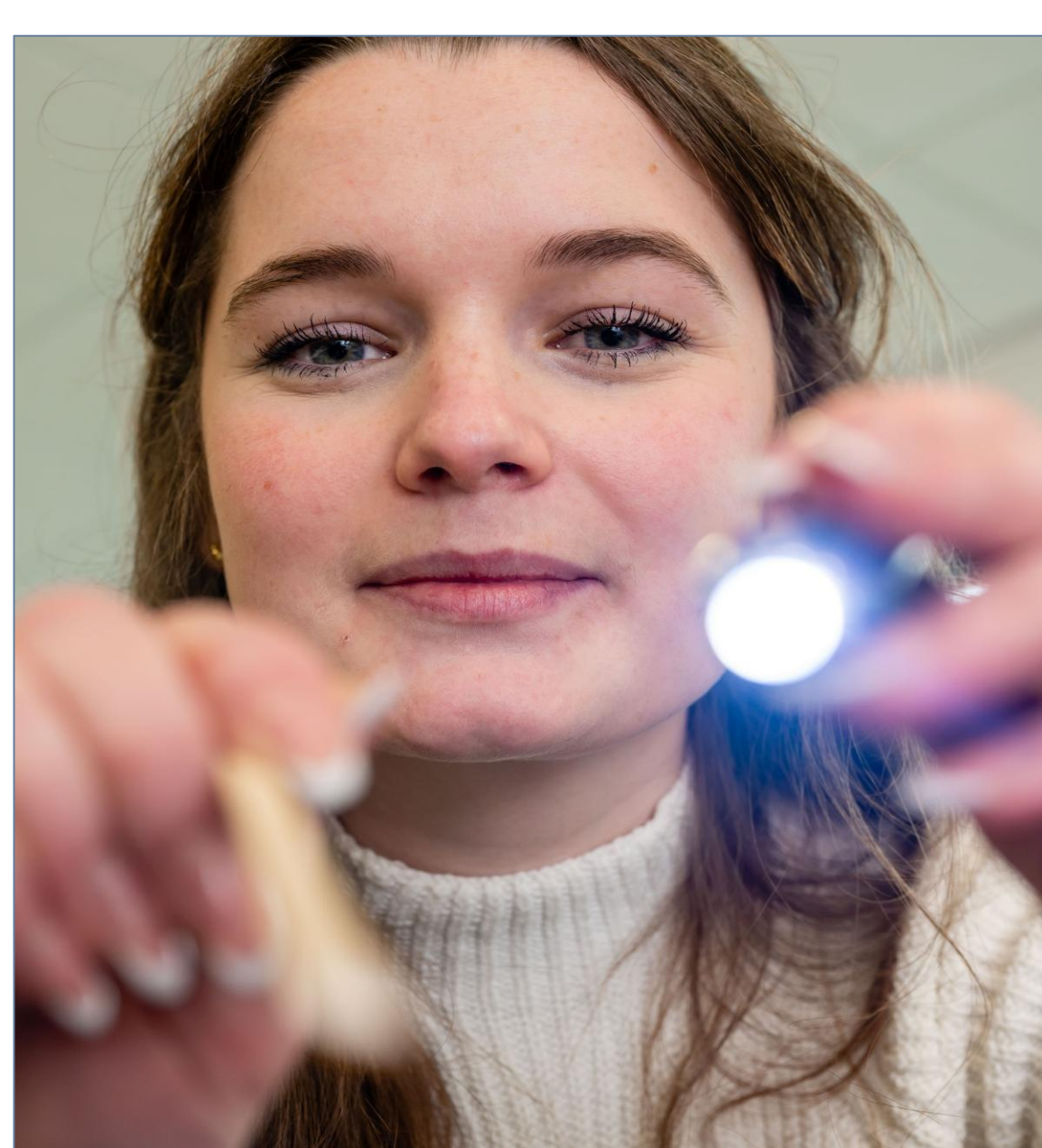
A literature review was conducted to examine current evidence. 98 pharmacists who completed NCSPP training between January and June 2025 were invited to participate in qualitative semi-structured interviews to explore participants' integration of clinical skills within practice. Data analysis was conducted using Braun and Clarke's Reflexive Thematic Analysis (RTA) framework (2006; 2019).



Image 1: community pharmacist consultation

Outcome/Results

12 invitees participated in interviews. Two themes and seven sub-themes were identified during data analysis (Table 1). Overall, the combined themes demonstrated a more holistic assessment approach, structured consultation and clinical decision-making, leading to improved continuity, more efficient care pathways, stronger MDT collaboration, and heightened patient trust in pharmacists as clinicians. Curriculum factors, workplace factors, human factors and ongoing professional development inter-woven to influence pharmacists' capabilities to utilise clinical skills in practice following NCSPP completion.



Images 2 & 3: pharmacists practising clinical skills

Themes	Sub/themes
1. Application and Impact on Patient Care	1a. Holistic, structured approach to consultation and assessment
	1b. Improved continuity of care, patient journeys and meeting unmet patient needs
	1c. Positive Patients Perspective
2. Factors Impacting on Capabilities	2a. Curriculum Factors
	2b. Workplace Factors
	2c. Ongoing Development
	2d. Human Factors

Table 1: themes and sub-themes

Conclusion

This study begins to address the concerns of the original literature review and provides valuable information for revising future content to align with evolving learning needs of newly qualified pharmacists registering as IPs. Finding also prompted deliberations on future clinical skills delivery for pharmacists in Scotland.

References

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77-101 <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp0630a>
 Clarke, V., Braun, V., Terry, G., & Hayfield, N. (2019). Thematic analysis. In P. Liamputtong (Ed.), *Handbook of research methods in health and social sciences*. Springer.
 NHS Scotland Directorate. (2025, March 31). NHS Scotland operational improvement plan. <https://www.gov.scot/publications/nhs-scotland-operational-improvement-plan/documents/>

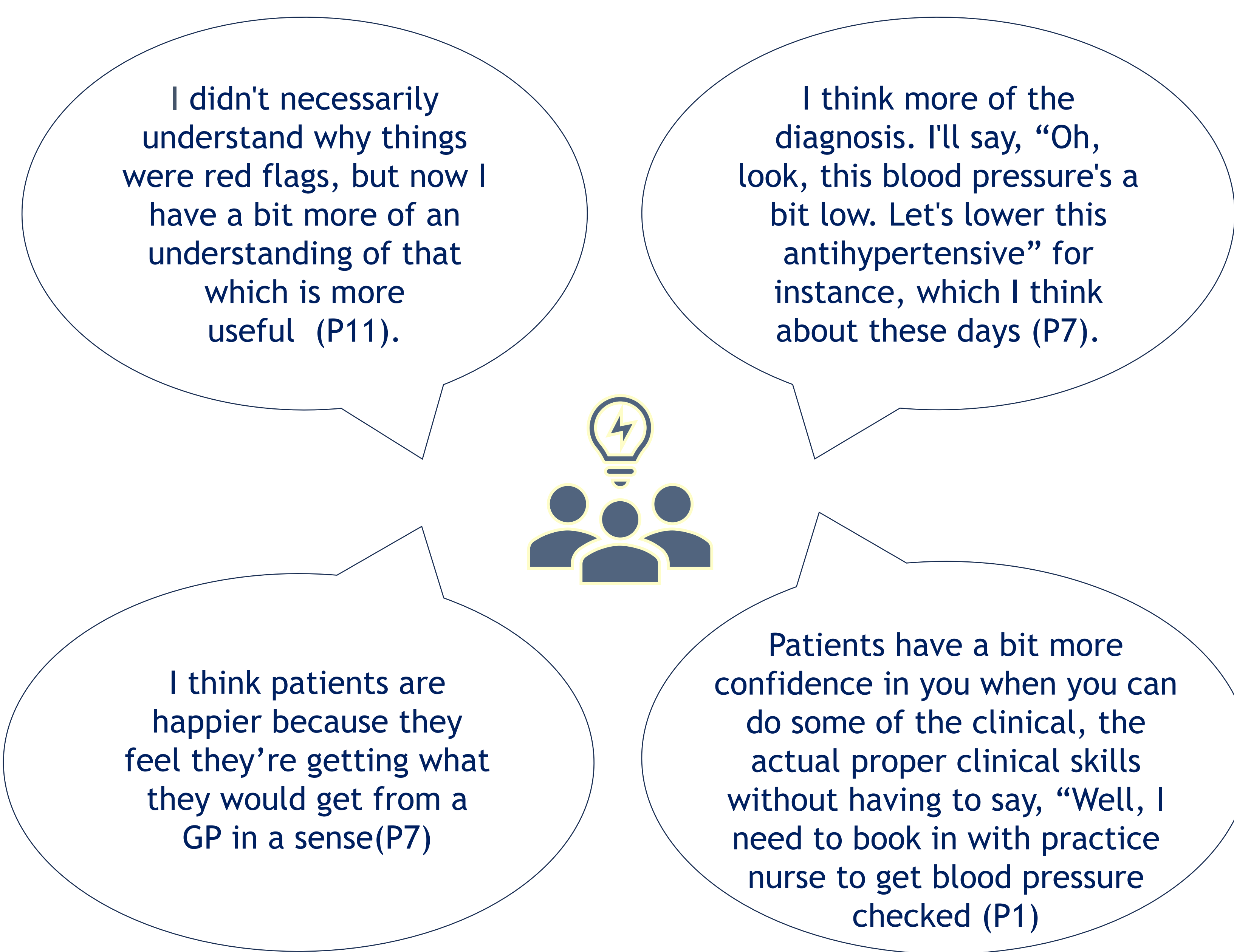


Diagram 1: extracts of participant data

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