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| Host department: UCL |
| Project Title: |
| Exploring the role of clinical pharmacists in providing personalised care for people living with and beyond cancer in primary care |
| Proposed supervisory team: |
| Dr Jessica Sheringham (Senior Research Fellow and Honorary Consultant in Public Health, UCL)  Dr Kumud Kantilal (Senior Research Fellow, UCL)  Dr Kind Ibrahim (Associate Professor, University of Southampton)  Other members of the supervisory team: TBC and can be appointed depending on expertise required.  The supervisory team offer expertise in developing and evaluating personalised care interventions for people with complex health needs, e.g., cancer, asthma, end of life care, Parkinson’s disease and dementia; medicines optimisation, public health and healthcare delivery; digital health; equity and effectiveness; qualitative and quantitative methodology and co-production with under-represented populations. Kantilal and Ibrahim are both pharmacists. |
| Potential for cross consortium networking and educational opportunities: |
| There are excellent opportunities for collaboration and learning:   * Departmental and PhD students research groups e.g. Qualitative Research methods group, Methodology groups (internal) * NIHR School for Primary Care Research and NIHR Three Schools Dementia Programme (national) * Collaborations with NHS clinical service providers and policymakers locally and nationally, including professional organisations e.g., Royal Pharmaceutical Society, British Oncology Pharmacy Association (external) |
| Project description: |
| There are over 3 million people currently living in the UK with cancer, which will increase to 4 million by 2030. Many people living with cancer have poor quality of life with significant physical and mental health issues many decades after their diagnosis. Providing personalised cancer care to this growing population is important to ensure care is tailored to their needs.  Personalised cancer care involves four elements: (1) health and wellbeing information support events, (2) holistic needs assessments with a personalised care and support plan, (3) end of treatment summaries, and (4) cancer care reviews. Cancer care reviews are delivered in primary care and involves a supportive conversation between a person with cancer-related needs and a healthcare professional. The conversation includes discussion about the cancer diagnosis and treatment, short and long-term consequences of treatment, medication reviews, physical activity advice, referral to relevant practitioners such as mental health or physiotherapy, and signposting to local support services. Cancer care reviews are usually delivered by general practitioners or general practice nurses and take place at two timepoints, within 3 months of a cancer diagnosis and 12 months post-diagnosis.  Given workforce challenges in general practice, clinical pharmacists have recently been embedded in GP practices in England to ease GP workload and improve patient access. Evaluation of pilot schemes have demonstrated that clinical pharmacists contribute significantly to patient safety, bring medicines and prescribing expertise, support with prescribing tasks, support patients with long term conditions including support for healthy lifestyles. Research has focused on responsibilities of clinical pharmacists in primary care e.g. medication reviews and telephone support for patients or on workforce issues such as integration of clinical pharmacists within primary care and the practice environment. However, little is known about expanding the role of clinical pharmacists in supporting people with complex and ongoing health and care needs such as those living with and beyond cancer.  Most UK research exploring pharmacy roles within cancer care has focused on secondary care pharmacists and community pharmacists, where roles and responsibilities differ from clinical pharmacists in primary care. QOF guidelines emphasise that clinical elements of cancer care reviews could be delivered by allied health professionals and clinical pharmacists with support from non-clinical team members such as social prescribers and cancer care coordinators with training and supervision. This will be the first study exploring the role of clinical pharmacists in supporting personalised care for cancer in primary care.  Aim: Understand what roles clinical pharmacists can play in supporting personalised cancer care in primary care.  Objectives:   1. Map the expanding role of clinical pharmacists in providing personalised care for people with complex health needs e.g. those with multiple long-term conditions, including cancer, in primary care by conducting an *evidence search and/or survey*. 2. Explore the role and scope of clinical pharmacists in the provision of personalised cancer care through *qualitative interviews and/or focus groups* with clinical pharmacists in primary care across England. 3. Explore with people living with and beyond cancer and family carers about their experiences of personalised cancer care and support by clinical pharmacists in primary care, using *qualitative interviews/focus groups.* 4. Co-produce guidance for delivering cancer care reviews in primary care by clinical pharmacists through *public and stakeholder engagement workshops*.   We will work with the successful candidate to identify in more detail the focus of study. |
| Indicative project costs: |
| Data collection costs, travel expenses, interview transcription and PPIE costs |
| Training and development provision by host: |
| ***Formal training:***Students will have access to high quality (free) training available through the UCL Doctoral Training programme: as well as department seminars, training, and research group meetings. Students can attend the popular [**UCL Qualitative Research methods in Health**](https://www.ucl.ac.uk/short-courses/search-courses/qualitative-research-methods-health) course. Bespoke  training specific to the candidate needs and professional development will be identified e.g., literature reviews, qualitative research and co-production. |
| ***Informal training:*** Students will be offered individual and small group support for learning including systematic review methods, qualitative and quantitative methodologies, writing, career development etc. There is a large, motivated and supportive community of PhD students at the Research Department of Primary Care and Population Health (PCPH). UCL Institute of Epidemiology and Healthcare offers career development support and runs an early career researchers’ group to connect and support PhD students. |
| ***PPIE*:** PCPH has an Expert by Experience panel, and PPI recruitment can also be more targeted. The candidate will be encouraged and supported to establish new links and to access the many PPIE training opportunities at UCL and Southampton. |