

A QUESTIONNAIRE-BASED STUDY TO INVESTIGATE FUTURE PHARMACISTS' VIEWS ON OVER-THE-COUNTER MEDICINES, AND THEIR PLACE WITHIN EVOLVING PHARMACY PRACTICE

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Study Aim and Methods

This study aimed to ascertain final year pharmacy students' views on OTC medicines and consultations. Data about OTC medicines and consultations were collected from consenting students at Queen's University Belfast via a pre-piloted paper-based questionnaire (November 2020). Data were coded and analysis mainly took the form of descriptive statistics.



 QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY BELFAST	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Advertising					✓
Cost		✓			
Easy to use			✓		
Effectiveness	✓				
Safety	✓				



Conclusions

Although data were only gathered from one institution, it is apparent that OTC consultations are still viewed as an key part of practice for these future pharmacists. Having confidence recommending a range of medicines and incorporating evidence into patient interactions needs to be reinforced, in preparation for expanding counter-prescribing and independent prescribing roles.

Once a month was the most common option for frequency of personal use among respondents. 'Analgesics' was the main type of medicine used

96% were in agreement that OTC consultations should remain a core role for pharmacists

Many deemed OTC consultations were potentially as complex as independent prescribing and vaccine administration

Variation in confidence existed for the 23 deregulated products. Females were more confident recommending emergency contraception than males. Many students did not want there to be further deregulations

All thought an evidence-based approach would enhance patient care but were less clear about the benefits of integrating evidence into OTC consultations in practice