

Author's response to reviews

Title: Internationally trained pharmacists in Britain: what do registration data tell us about their recruitment?

Authors:

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Author's response to reviews: see over

Authors' response to reviewers comments from James Buchan (reviewer 1) and Ruth Young (reviewer 2) – Ellen Schafheutle & Karen Hassell

James Buchan's comments (Reviewer 1)

Minor Essential Revisions

1.abstract and in text -"ten new states joined the EU in 2004 and 2007" is Incorrect - 10 joined in 2004, a further 2 in 2007
- *amended text on pages 2 (abstract) & 6*

2.abstract-"The aims" should be sub heading - *added*

3.abstract- "..and all the overseas groups are more likely to work fulltime"..than whom??
Than GB trained – changed

4.p4 background- As of October 2008 there is a completely new immigration process for pharmacists and others entering UK- authors should note this?
We have checked and do not think that the new points based immigration system should affect pharmacists from outside the EEA, whilst they (and pharmacy technicians) remain on the National Shortage Occupation List issued by the UK Border Agency. This is mentioned right at the start of the paper and, to avoid confusion, we suggest not to add further information regarding the new (or old) immigration process.

5- p4, for non UK readers a little more detail on "new pharmacy contract" is Needed
Sentence added.

6- p4, first sentence of final para is unclear
Clarified.

7- p6, top- authors should clarify- 'pharmacists who are not EEA nationals or who have obtained their qualifications outside of the EEA must..' - what is situation of non EEA national who has EEA based qualification?
Added 'both' to sentence in previous paragraph – for clarification.

8- p6 authors should give reason[s] why the third entry route was closed.
Sentence and reference added for explanation.

9-p6 final para and elsewhere use of phrase "overseas" is not relevant to an international audience
This was also note by reviewer 2 (Ruth Young), and we have decided to change 'overseas' or 'non-GB qualified' to 'internationally trained' throughout. This has also meant a slight amendment to the title. Furthermore, we have added an explanatory definition under methods.

10-p9 "the proportion of European pharmacists" - for accuracy should be "proportion of pharmacists entering via the European route"?

Changed.

11- p9 and elsewhere, certain words are underlines- e.g. year of first registration- not necessary?

Underlines removed.

12- p11- misspelt ethnic as ethic.

Corrected.

13- p11 "country of origin"- would it be more accurate to state "country of training" or "country of qualification"?

Changed to 'country of training' throughout

14- p12 word missing- registered address

'address' added.

15- p16 "country of origin" as above is this the correct phrase?

Changed to 'country of training' – also see under 13-.

16- p17 final para "remain in GB the longest" - re word.

Reworded.

17-p17 final para- should authors note that work permits would be required for many non EEA pharmacists when they first arrive in GB and this would constrain their mobility?

Sentence added.

Ruth Young's comments (Reviewer 2)

1. Results/Discussion - My main comment here relates to the fact that the sub-sections could be more helpfully written up around analytical themes rather than types of data analysed. For example, the subsection entitled "Registered addresses" seems to be about two issues - geographical distribution within GB, and (possibly?) return migration to countries of origin. In the section on "Changes between register extracts in 2007 and 2006", the last sentence says that these data support "analysis presented earlier when exploring overseas trained pharmacists with an overseas address in 2007". Might it be better to discuss this all together in a single section on, for example, lengths of stay in GB? If the authors took this themed approach then the subsection titles could also usefully reflect the change to refer to the themes/types of findings revealed not data types analysed.

- Subheadings changed to 'geographical distribution within GB' and 'return migration to countries of training.'

- Paragraph referring to Table 2 moved to one following whole Register analysis of addresses outside GB (page 13).

- Sentence re: 'joiners' and 'leavers' identification and analysis moved to end of methods section.

- Heading 'Changes between Register extracts of 2007 and 2006' removed.

- Paragraph presenting 'leavers' age analysis (originally page 13, under above mentioned heading – now removed) moved to section presenting ages (originally page 10).

2. Results/Discussion - again in the section on "Registered addresses" - The authors state earlier that the results section will focus on pharmacists with a GB address but this sub-section appears to include those with a registered addresses abroad (which is confusing and needs clarification).

- One sentence added, 2nd under new heading 'Return migration to country of training'

3. Results/Discussion (p17) - This talks about the recommendation that GB actively recruit more pharmacists from abroad. It is interesting that no mention is made of wider debates on the "ethics" of such an approach (ethical recruitment policy; Codes of Practice on international recruitment etc). Also could the authors comment on the implications of such a reliance for the GB workforce (re. workforce planning, reliance on potentially more mobile workforce due to possibilities of return migration etc). Such issues are very important and should be part of a strengthened discussion (and Conclusion).

The conclusion has been expanded and strengthened.

4. Conclusions - These need to be strengthened, for example, taking in implications of issues such as lengths of stay, geographical distribution, return migration etc for the GB workforce (and sources?). Also on p20 "countries of origin" are referred to but earlier the authors said no such data were available - so do they mean "world regions"? The statement is made that GB does not rely on overseas pharmacists as much as it does in other health professions - is that the interesting contrast? Or would it be more interesting looking to the future to highlight the fact of pharmacy's greater reliance on European sources compared with other professions? Finally, it would be very helpful if the Conclusions acknowledged that this sort of analysis should be a stepping to more sophisticated research on the pharmacy workforce - and suggested some more lines of future enquiry.

The conclusion has been expanded and strengthened.

5. Definitions

a) GB –

- *definition now moved to beginning of methods.*

b) adjudication and reciprocal routes - it is left quite late to tell the reader what these are.

- *Adjudication & reciprocal routes are explained on pages 5 & 6, which are the 2nd and 3rd pages of the main text, which is quite early, so no change has been made.*

c) Europe - is this the EEA? What countries are included?

- *EEA is EU but also includes Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland.*

Explanation added in brackets.

d) Overseas - Particularly in the abstract the authors could be clearer about what is meant by overseas or international. In medicine "overseas" would more likely refer to professionals qualified outside the EEA. Might it be better to use the overall term "internationally-qualified" and explain that is referring to both Europe (EEA?) and elsewhere overseas?

- *all replaced with 'internationally trained' – also see under reviewer 1 comments.*

6. Methods – more detail on analyses undertaken.

Two sentences added to the end of the methods section.

7. Other proof reading/editing comments:

p12 - 96.7% is mentioned twice but one figure is supposed to be higher than the other?

Figure for European pharmacists corrected to 95.3%.

p13 - The sentence "It is possible to look in more detail at which overseas countries pharmacists live in" could be deleted to get straight into the discussion on return migration etc.

Sentence deleted and link made with preceding paragraph.

p12 - The sentence "While 83.3% of GB-trained pharmacists..." needs checking for correct wording.

Word 'address' missing, as noted by reviewer 1, and added.