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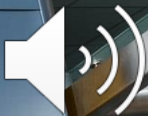
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University Hospital Southampton (UHS) Medicines Helpline: Improving patient engagement and experience

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Introduction

Many NHS hospital pharmacy or medicine information departments provide a medicine helpline for their patients

- The UHS Southampton Medicines Advice Service (SMAS) launched its Medicines Helpline in 2011
- On average, it helps over 140 UHS patients and carers each month with a range of medication-related concerns.
- The current user survey is based on **what UHS expect** patients would find important about the service.



There is **little known** about the service needs and expectations of patients/carers or how best to promote this services to users.

The **aim** of this study was to explore **patient and carers' priorities** for the UHS Medicines Helpline and establish the most effective **promotional strategies** in accordance with **their needs and expectations**.



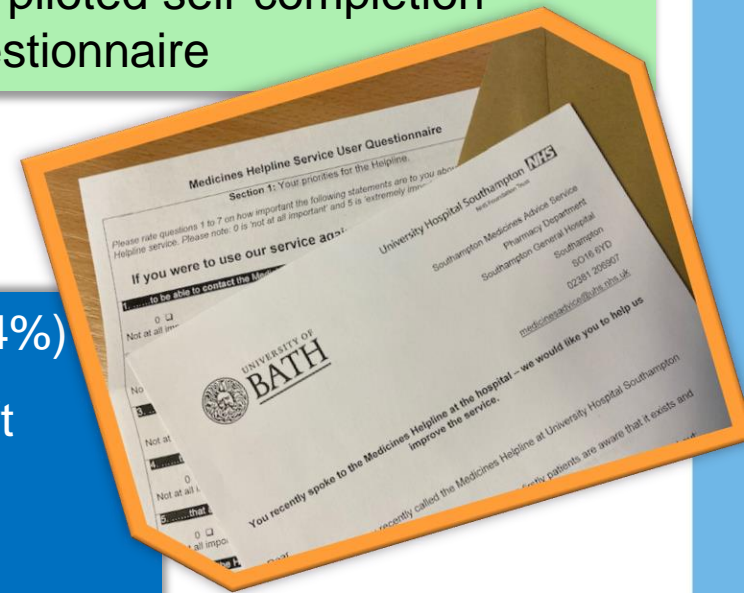
Method

- Study protocol was developed
- Approved by University of Bath Research Ethics Approval Committee for Health (REACH)
- Questionnaire designed, peer-reviewed and piloted

- A list of helpline callers (over 3 month period) was generated from MiDatabank
- **169 service users** met the criteria and were posted a pre-piloted self-completion questionnaire

Analysis

- **75 completed questionnaires** were returned (44%)
- Data were electronically transcribed into Microsoft Excel
- Transcription was second checked
- Then coded and transferred to an IBM SPSS® Statistics database for quantitative analysis



Results



If you were to use our service again, how <u>important</u> is it to you...	% (n=75)
to be able to contact the Medicines Helpline easily?	74.7%
that the Helpline staff understand your needs correctly?	88.0%
that Helpline staff agree to get back to you at a time that is convenient for you?	57.3%
that Helpline staff get back to you on time ?	58.7%
that the advice given by the Helpline staff is helpful ?	77.3%
that the Helpline staff give you enough information ?	80.0%
to be confident in the answer/advice the Helpline staff give you?	81.3%

Table 1: Percentage of services users that rated the following priorities as 'extremely important' were they to use the service again.

Discussion and Conclusion

- ❑ Service users report the importance of helpline staff being able to **understand their query**, and provide them with **helpful advice** and **sufficient information**.
- ❑ They also need to **feel confident** in the answer/advice the service provides.
- ❑ Promotional improvements **are still needed**; despite the majority of users being satisfied with the current advertisement, 21% of users describing advertising as poor or very poor (n=75).

Future qualitative work will explore potential 'new' service users' views in the form of semi-structured interviews in order to 'triangulate' the quantitative data from this study. The current user survey and promotional methods will be revised accordingly.

This study has helped to identify local **service user needs** of the UHS Medicines Helpline and the **need for improvements** to be made on existing **promotional** strategies