

## Pharmacy Services – A Focus on Clinical Delivery

Community pharmacy has undergone a major transformation over the past few years and the pandemic had played a key part in this. Traditionally, community pharmacies were merely seen as a collection point for medications with only some using it as an advice hub by speaking to their pharmacist about their medication and some to discuss and treat minor conditions.

With the difficulties in getting through to your local GP and surgeries under a lot of pressure due to back logs because of the pandemic, patients are now turning to their local pharmacies as a first point of contact. With pharmacies having an open-door policy and being accessible outside usual hours, patients now have access to a range of clinical services and expert advice as pharmacies are now being able to offer more than just dispensing services.

In addition to over the counter medications for minor conditions and ailments, you can now also get a lot more from your community pharmacy in terms of clinical services with a wide variety being available free on the NHS and a whole host of private services too. Some of the services include ear wax removal, vaccinations such as covid, flu and travel, blood pressure testing, cholesterol measurements, phlebotomy services to name a few. The availability of these services gives the patients extra flexibility and better access and also helps in reducing the pressure at local surgeries as they can signpost patients to the pharmacies which helps the GP's to dedicate their time to the more serious conditions.

Some pharmacies are going a step further by offering in house clinics specialising in conditions such as diabetes, blood pressure, asthma and COPD through their pharmacists who have trained to become Independent prescribers. We will see this coming into full effect in future years as all newly qualified pharmacists will come out of university having had this additional training as part of their course structure. This will open up the door to a variety of services pharmacists can offer and also provide a strong working relationship with local surgeries and doctors.

Community pharmacy will be an integral part of the health care system and work closely with the local surgeries in delivering a variety of clinical services to our local patients. They will be at the forefront by providing sound and expert advice about medications and provide advanced services which will rebrand them into mini health clinics and a place where patients can turn to for anything health related and will be sure to get the best possible service from a dedicated team of pharmacists and their highly trained team members.

Best wishes,

*Ali Dalal*

GMLPC Committee Member