Pharmacovigilance and non-medical prescribers: exploring perceptions of training, contribution and potential for enhancement

INTRODUCTION
The UK based process for spontaneous reporting of suspected adverse drug reactions (ADRs), known as the ‘Yellow Card Scheme’ (YCS), encourages reports to be submitted by healthcare professionals, patients and the general public. However, poor reporting rates are a long-standing limitation affecting the YCS. The introduction of supplementary and independent prescribing rights for pharmacists, nurses and other healthcare professionals has the potential to enhance participation in the regulatory pharmacovigilance processes. The aim of this research was to determine nurse and pharmacist prescribers’ perceptions of their training, contribution and potential for enhancement of their pharmacovigilance role.

METHOD
A web-based survey instrument was developed, tested for face and content validity by an expert panel, and piloted. It comprised 5 sections on: prescriber demographics; pharmacovigilance training; experience of Yellow Card reporting; attitudes toward ADR reporting; comments and suggestions to encourage Yellow Card reporting. Nurse prescribers were sampled through the Association of Nurse Prescribers (n=912). Pharmacist prescribers (n=2439) were targeted through: national continuing education organisations; national Pharmacy Boards; local practice forums and the National Prescribing Centre. Quantitative data were analysed using SPSS version 17.0 with a thematic approach used to analyse responses to open questions.

RESULTS
Respondents felt competent and aware of their pharmacovigilance role with further training needs indicated. Findings may not be generalisable due to the low response rate; no information is available on non-respondents. Increased publicity and education are identified as key measures for enhancing non-medical prescribers, other healthcare professionals and patients Yellow Card reporting.

DISCUSSION
Respondents felt competent and aware of their pharmacovigilance role with further training needs indicated. Findings may not be generalisable due to the low response rate; no information is available on non-respondents. Increased publicity and education are identified as key measures for enhancing non-medical prescribers, other healthcare professionals and patients Yellow Card reporting.

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References