

Love your lungs, community pharmacy public health campaign report

Author: Andrew Evans, Principal Pharmacist in Pharmaceutical Public Health

Date: 22 March 2013

Version: 1

Publication/ Distribution:

- Chief Pharmaceutical Officer, Welsh Government
- Health Board Chief Pharmacists
- British Lung Foundation
- Community Pharmacy Wales
- Royal Pharmaceutical Society, Wales
- Public Health Wales intra and internet web pages

Review Date: NA

Purpose and Summary of Document:

To report on the Love Your Lungs Public Health Campaign delivered through community pharmacies in Wales during two weeks commencing November 12th 2012.

Work Plan reference: PLA

© 2013 Public Health Wales NHS Trust

Material contained in this document may be reproduced without prior permission provided it is done so accurately and is not used in a misleading context.

Acknowledgement to the Public Health Wales NHS Trust to be stated.

Executive summary

Under the community pharmacy contractual framework community pharmacies are expected to participate proactively in up to six health promotion campaigns per annum, which may be either local or national. In 2011, Health Board Chief Pharmacists agreed that Public Health Wales would facilitate and evaluate up to three national campaigns per annum. This paper reports on the third national community pharmacy public health campaign of 2012/13, the main purpose of which was to raise public awareness of the dangers of ignoring persistent cough and to highlight risk factors associated with respiratory disease, especially the risks associated with smoking. The campaign also offered an opportunity to:

- Signpost smokers to NHS smoking cessation services;
- Remind eligible patients to get their NHS flu vaccine; and
- For patients already diagnosed with respiratory disease to take up the option of a Medicines Use Review (MUR).

The campaign was supported by all 7 Health Board Chief Pharmacists and delivered in partnership with Public Health Wales, Community Pharmacy Wales, and supported by the British Lung Foundation Wales and the Royal Pharmaceutical Society (Wales).

During the two week campaign period commencing 12th November 2012, community pharmacies across Wales supported individuals in completing a short breath test questionnaire related to respiratory symptoms.

Information from the questionnaire was recorded for each person and where appropriate, individuals were referred to their GP practice for further investigation. Smokers were provided with information relating to NHS stop smoking services provided either by Stop Smoking Wales or by community pharmacies; eligible patients were reminded to get their NHS

flu vaccination. Patients already diagnosed with a respiratory condition could be offered an MUR, to check understanding and administration technique e.g. in the use of prescribed inhalers.

Campaign evaluation forms were completed and returned from 82% of community pharmacies. Over 13,000 people completed the questionnaires. Analysis of completed questionnaires revealed that 26% had symptoms that were indicative of probable respiratory disease and were referred to their GP practice for further investigation. 583 MURs were offered as a result of the intervention with 1,326 people signposted to smoking cessation services and 1,208 reminded to get a flu vaccination.

1 Background

Wales has a high incidence of lung disease: the British Lung Foundation report that around 1 in 5 people have some form of diagnosed lung condition¹. In Wales, approximately 62,000 people have been diagnosed with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD). In 2011, Wales had its highest number of emergency hospital admissions for respiratory disease in a decade. There were a total of 46,218 emergency hospital admissions, 8,589 of which were for COPD. These admissions resulted in an average length of hospital stay of 8.38 days and there were 1495 recorded deaths from COPD in this period².

COPD is used to describe a number of lung conditions, including chronic bronchitis and emphysema. The condition develops over a number of

¹ British Lung Foundation Wales. Available at: <http://www.blf.org.uk/Region/Wales>. [Accessed 21 March 2013].

² Patient Episode Data for Wales (PEDW). Available at: <http://www.infoandstats.wales.nhs.uk/page.cfm?pid=41010&orgid=869>. [Accessed 15 February 2013].

years and causes the airways to narrow resulting in irreversible damage. The main cause is smoking, although exposure to dust (e.g. coal dust) and genetic factors can also cause the condition. Current or ex smokers are at increased risk.

Symptoms can be similar to those of asthma and include a persistent cough, breathlessness, chronic bronchitis, or lots of phlegm. If diagnosed early, COPD can be treated and symptoms managed well. People with COPD are eligible for an NHS flu vaccine to help protect them from complications resulting from influenza.

2 Introduction

The Community Pharmacy Contractual Framework places an obligation on community pharmacy contractors to signpost people to relevant health and social care providers and patient groups and to participate in up to six local or national public health campaigns each year. Health Board Chief Pharmacists in Wales agreed to support this national health public health campaign, the main purpose of which was to raise public awareness of the risks associated with the development of respiratory disease and of the symptoms which may give rise to concern. Pharmacists were able to advise on lifestyle measures that could mitigate the risk of developing COPD. Patients who recorded three positive responses on the *British Lung Foundation Breath Test* (Appendix1) were referred to their GP practice for further investigation. The support and expertise of the British Lung Foundation (BLF) Wales enabled this national campaign to be carried out.

3 Key messages

The key messages which the Love Your lungs campaign was seeking to deliver were:

- Don't ignore a persistent cough.
- Understand the factors that can affect respiratory health.
- Smoking is the biggest cause of COPD.
- Giving up smoking will improve lung health.
- Eligible patients should get their NHS influenza vaccination.
- For patients with COPD, an MUR could improve symptom control for example by improving inhaler technique.

4 Method

- 4.1 During the two week campaign period people were encouraged to visit their community pharmacy to complete a short questionnaire and be provided with information about respiratory disease, including advice on lifestyle.
- 4.2 A letter was sent to all pharmacies by Health Board Chief Pharmacists a few weeks ahead of the campaign advising them of the campaign and reminding them of their contractual terms.
- 4.3 The campaign was launched on Monday 12th November in a community pharmacy and was supported by Mr Tim Rhys Evans and Only Men Aloud. The launch was attended by the Minister for Health and Social Care and the Chair of the National Assembly for Wales' Health and Social Care Committee.
- 4.4 Campaign material was designed by BLF Wale with advice from Community Pharmacy Wales (CPW) and Public Health Wales (PHW) to ensure its appropriateness for use in pharmacies. Campaign material was delivered to the Public Health Champion in all pharmacies through the NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership (NWSSP).
- 4.5 Community pharmacies were contacted by CPW, by email, before, during and after the campaign reminding them to participate and of the requirement to return evaluation forms. Breathe Easy groups in Wales were briefed by BLF to encourage people to make contact with pharmacies.

- 4.6 Case studies were developed which described COPD patients who had benefitted from specific community pharmacy services and called for others to visit a pharmacy during the campaign to take the British Lung Foundation Breath Test. These were provided to local press.
- 4.7 The key campaign intervention involved pharmacists and appropriately qualified pharmacy staff supporting the public in completing the *Breath Test Questionnaire* (Appendix 1), providing relevant advice and signposting.
- 4.8 Pharmacy contractors were asked to record the questionnaire responses and return collated data to Public Health Wales by the 10th December 2012.
- 4.9 Financial support was provided by BLF Wales to meet the printing costs of the public facing campaign material. BLF Wales with CPW provided considerable resource to the media efforts (Appendix 2). CPW was also a key partner in developing the communication material for pharmacies and acting as a point of contact for community pharmacy contractors.

5 Results

Table 1. Wales - summary of campaign questionnaires reported to Public Health Wales by 31st December 2012

Pharmacies returning the evaluation form (%)	No. of patients completing questionnaire	Referred to GP practice (%)	Smokers/Ex smokers (%)	Signposted to Stop Smoking Wales	Provided with pharmacy stop smoking service	Signposted to GP for flu vaccine	Provided flu vaccine at Pharmacy	Offered an MUR
584 (81.9)	13,214	3,497 (26.5)	6,837 (48.3)	621	705	865	343	583

Table 2. Health Board - summary of campaign questionnaires reported to Public Health Wales by 31st December 2012

Health Board	Pharmacies returning the evaluation form	No. of patients completing questionnaire	Referred to GP practice	Smokers/Ex smokers	Signposted to Stop Smoking Wales	Provided with pharmacy stop smoking service	Signposted to GP for flu vaccine	Provided flu vaccine at Pharmacy	Offered an MUR
Abertawe Bro Morgannwg	75.2%	1,900	29.3%	53.8%	206	74	164	56	86
Aneurin Bevan	75.8%	2,181	26.4%	52.3%	125	107	138	26	83
Betsi Cadwaladr	91.4%	4,123	26.3%	53.1%	117	269	252	29	195
Cardiff and Vale	81.1%	1,949	28.3%	51.4%	38	135	126	204	75
Cwm Taf	83.1%	1,465	24.2%	49.0%	40	81	107	18	67
Hywel Dda	67.7%	1,024	25.9%	46.8%	86	15	44	4	57
Powys	47.8%	266	19.9%	51.1%	3	14	5	0	8

6 Discussion

6.1 Participation by community pharmacies

The response rate from community pharmacies was 81.9%. Improved campaign logistics and greater involvement from both Health Boards and CPW in chasing non-responders after the official end of the campaign are likely to have contributed to achieving a rate comparable to that seen for the previous stroke/diabetes campaign and which was higher than that observed with earlier national campaigns. The high response rate may also be as a result of familiarity with the campaign subject matter, particularly in relation to smoking cessation and improving inhaler technique. Media coverage and the involvement of the Minister and Only Men Aloud is likely to have raised public awareness of the campaign and contributed to participation rates at a time of year where pharmacy workload is typically high.

6.2 The risk tool/questionnaire

The British Lung Foundation's *Breath Test Questionnaire*, used in this campaign, is intended to identify people with symptoms indicative of COPD. There is no single diagnostic test for COPD. Making a diagnosis relies on clinical judgement based on a combination of history, physical examination and confirmation of the presence of airflow obstruction by spirometry.

The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) in its guidance entitled *Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease: Management of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease in adults in primary and secondary care* states that a diagnoses of COPD should be considered in patients

over the age of 35 who have a risk factor (generally smoking) and who present with one or more of the following symptoms:

- Exertional breathlessness
- Chronic cough
- Regular sputum production
- Frequent winter “bronchitis”

Patients who positively answered three or more of the questions posed in the *Breath Test Questionnaire* were referred to their GP for further investigation.

6.3 Patient impact

Over 13,000 people completed the questionnaire in Wales during the two week period which commenced 12th November 2012.

Whilst no measures were taken of smoking cessation activity during the campaign, pharmacists were able to use completing the questionnaire as an opportunity to signpost people to NHS smoking cessation services provided either by Stop Smoking Wales or, where commissioned by the Health Board, NHS pharmacy stop smoking services. Pharmacists were also able to offer MURs to those already being treated for a respiratory condition. Referrals to Stop Smoking Wales, pharmacy stop smoking services and for MUR were recorded.

For smokers choosing to self care, the option to take advice at the pharmacy and purchase smoking cessation products was available.

Where pharmacists identified eligible patients that had not been vaccinated against influenza they were able to refer them to their GP or to a pharmacy for an NHS flu vaccination. Referrals to GPs and flu vaccinations provided by pharmacies were recorded. The latter included a number of patients vaccinated against flu under private arrangements, at pharmacies not providing free NHS vaccination; it is not possible to determine whether or not these patients were eligible for an NHS vaccination.

6.4 Logistics and organisation

Campaign packs were delivered to the three regional depots of NWSSP four weeks prior to the campaign start date. Most pharmacies received the packs in good time to mount the campaign. In a small number of pharmacies packs did not arrive until the first week of the campaign. Despite pharmacies signing for the receipt of campaign packs, some pharmacies subsequently contacted Public Health Wales due to non-receipt.

6.5 Evaluation

Campaign packs included an evaluation form to be returned to Public Health Wales at the end of the two week campaign. Community Pharmacy Wales and Health Boards encouraged pharmacies to participate before and during the campaign period and reminded contractors to return evaluation forms after the campaign had ended. The cut off date for returns was extended to 31st December 2012 to allow for those who requested duplicate packs after reporting non-delivery during the campaign.

Health Boards have been provided with a list of any non-responders in order to investigate why campaign evaluation reports were not returned.

A small number of forms were not stamped with the pharmacy address and some pharmacies failed to return the evaluation form although the anonymous questionnaires were returned. The anonymised data has been included in the All Wales Figures but could not be apportioned to the Health Board summary.

In total, 3,497 people were advised to make an appointment at their GP practice for further investigation and advice. All 13,214 people who completed the questionnaire were provided with advice relating to respiratory risk factors and healthy lifestyles.

The campaign enabled pharmacists and their staff to give advice to smokers on smoking cessation and to offer those patients already diagnosed with a respiratory condition an MUR. Additionally, eligible individuals were reminded to attend their GP practice for a flu vaccination or, where the service was available at the pharmacy, were offered an appointment.

7 Recommendations

- Future national community pharmacy campaigns should be planned so as to fully utilise the potential for pharmacies to deliver campaigns which can be supported by the availability of associated NHS pharmacy services (e.g. for example by identifying people who might benefit from the MUR or NHS pharmacy smoking cessation service).

- Where possible future community pharmacy campaigns should be planned to coincide with and support national campaigns co-ordinated by Public Health Wales or the Welsh Government.
- Where there is an expectation that campaigns will result in patients presenting at other services, Public Health Wales should investigate the feasibility of using routine data collected by those services to measure the impact of future campaigns.
- Public Health Wales should continue to address future National Campaign Material to the, Public Health Champion, in pharmacies.
- NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership should continue to obtain a signature for receipt on delivery of campaign material.
- Community Pharmacy Wales should work with contractors to ensure that campaign materials are properly put aside on receipt in readiness for campaigns
- Public Health Wales should investigate the feasibility of distributing some campaign materials and collating evaluation responses electronically.
- Health Boards should review response rates and investigate if and why a small number of contractors did not comply with the requirement to return evaluation reports.
- Health Boards and Community Pharmacy Wales should continue to contact contractors before, during and after the campaign to maximise participation.
- The British Lung Foundation's *Breath Test Questionnaire* could be used routinely by pharmacies to help identify people with respiratory symptoms of concern.

Appendix 1. The Breath Test Questionnaire

Don't ignore
your bad cough any longer.

Take a couple of minutes to
answer the following questions:



- 1:** Are you 35 years old or more?
☐ Yes ☐ No
- 2:** Are you a smoker or ex-smoker?
☐ Yes ☐ No
- 3:** Are you breathless when you do any exercise or exert yourself?
☐ Yes ☐ No
- 4:** Do you cough regularly?
☐ Yes ☐ No
- 5:** When you cough, do you bring up phlegm?
☐ Yes ☐ No
- 6:** Do you wheeze when you breathe?
☐ Yes ☐ No
- 7:** Do you often get 'winter bronchitis'?
☐ Yes ☐ No

If you have answered 'yes' to three or more of these questions you could have COPD. Visit your GP for a check-up.

If you're at all concerned or have any questions about your lung health, the BLF can give you expert advice and information over the phone, in print and online. Call our helpline today on **03000 030 555** or visit **www.blf.org.uk**

Registered charity in England and Wales (326730) and in Scotland (SC038415)

Appendix 2. Love Your Lungs campaign media coverage list (supplied by partners).

National Radio:

Monday 12th November 2012, Real Radio

Monday 12th November 2012, Radio Cymru

National/Regional Press:

Western Mail. Love your lungs and look after yourself with new free test. *Western Mail*. [Online]. November 12 2012. Available at:
<http://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/health-news/2012/11/12/love-your-lungs-and-look-after-yourself-with-new-free-test-91466-32212015/> [Accessed 12th Nov 2013]

Paul Gimson is a pharmacist and the director for the Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Wales. Here he outlines the importance of the Love Your Lungs campaign. Walesonline [Online]. November 12 2012. Available at:
<http://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/health-news/2012/11/12/paul-gimson-is-a-pharmacist-and-the-director-for-the-royal-pharmaceutical-society-in-wales-here-he-outlines-the-importance-of-the-love-your-lungs-campaign-91466-32212012/> [Accessed 12th Nov 2012]

Local Radio:

Thursday 15th November 2012, Radio Cardiff

Thursday 15th November 2012, Calon FM (Wrexham)

Local Newspapers:

South Wales Evening Post. Choir breathe life into new health campaign. *South Wales Evening Post*. [Online] November 8 2012. Available at: <http://www.thisissouthwales.co.uk/Choir-breathe-life-new-health-campaign/story-17265659-detail/story.html> [Accessed 8th Nov 2012]

South Wales Evening Post. Chance for lung test. *South Wales Evening Post* [Online] November 21 2012. Available at: <http://www.thisissouthwales.co.uk/Chance-lung-test/story-17380842-detail/story.html> [Accessed 21st Nov 2012]

Daily Post. Love your lungs and look after yourself with new test. *Daily Post*. [Online]. November 12 2012. Available at: <http://www.dailypost.co.uk/news/local-north-wales-news/cardiff-news/2012/11/12/love-your-lungs-and-look-after-yourself-with-new-free-test-55578-32212017/> [Accessed 12th Nov 2012]

Gwent Gazette. Only men Aloud boss joins lung campaign. *Gwent Gazette*. [Online]. November 22 2012. Available at: <http://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/south-wales-news/blaenau-gwent/2012/11/22/only-men-aloud-boss-joins-lung-campaign-91466-32271899/> [Accessed 22nd Nov 2012]

Online:

Pharmaceutical Journal. *Pharmacists in the steps of Archie Cochrane*. Weblog. [Online]. November 21 2012. Available at: http://www.pjonline.com/blog_entry/pharmacists_in_the_steps_of_cochrane. [Accessed 21st Nov 2012]

Bloodworth J. Welsh pharmacies drive to improve lung health. *Chemist and Druggist* [Online]. November 8 2012. Available at: http://www.chemistanddruggist.co.uk/news-content/-/article_display_list/14900422/welsh-pharmacies-in-drive-to-improve-lung-health [Accessed 8th Nov 2012]

UK News. *Love your lungs*. [Online]. Available at: <http://www.newsrt.co.uk/news/love-your-lungs-and-look-after-yourself-with-new-free-test-945275.html> [Accessed 12th Nov 2012]

Govtoday. *RPS backs campaign to help those at risk of lung diseases*. [Online]. Available at: <http://www.govtoday.co.uk/pharmacy/13689-rps-backs-campaign-to-help-those-at-risk-of-lung-diseases> [Accessed 12th Nov 2012]

HealthCarePromotions.co.uk . *Love your lungs and look after their health*. [Online]. Available at: http://www.healthcarepromotions.co.uk/site/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=379&Itemid=1 [Accessed 11th Nov 2012]

Medicine and Health Sciences Library. *Love your lungs campaign launched*. Weblog, [Online]. Available from: <http://sumedlibrary.wordpress.com/2012/11/07/love-your-lungs-campaign-launched/> [Accessed 7th Nov 2012]

AberdareOnline. *Love your lungs*. [Online]. Available at: <http://www.aberdareonline.co.uk/content/love-your-lungs> [Accessed 5th Nov 2012]