

Elucidating pharmacists' perception towards the utilisation of Pharmacy Research Priority in conducting research in Malaysia

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ABSTRACT:

Introduction: Pharmacy Research Priority in Malaysia (PRPM) was launched by the Pharmaceutical Services Programme (PSP) in 2018. The objective of the document was to rationalise pharmacy research activities in generating relevant data and evidence to address national health problems in Malaysia. This study was aimed to explore the perceptions of MOH pharmacists in utilising this document while conducting their respective researches.

Methods: Two online focus group discussion sessions were conducted among pharmacists who representing various discipline in Ministry of Health Malaysia. Thematic analysis was performed on the transcribed data and relevant themes and sub-themes were derived.

Results: There were three thematic categories emerged which were (1) awareness of the PRPM document, (2) utilisation practice and motivation to refer to the PRPM document as well as (3) barriers affecting their utilisation practice. Overall, the document was perceived to be useful among MOH pharmacists to guide them while conducting their research activities. However, there were several barriers had been identified including exhaustive length of the document as well as partial understanding of its function on how to make use of it by the MOH pharmacists. The document was used as categorisation tool instead and most of the pharmacists did not refer to the PRPM document when conducting their research. We also managed to identify several recommendations from the participants to improve future uptake of PRPM document. This include utilisation of technological creative media platform that are more user-friendly and more engaging to the younger generation of pharmacists.

Discussion: Although the document was perceived as beneficial by the MOH pharmacists, there were several barriers identified that hinders them from utilising it. This might be due to minimal promotional activities been carried out for the document. Nevertheless, further study should be conducted to further assess the uptake of this document by pharmacy researchers as a whole and various initiatives need to be taken to improve the PRPM utilisation to ensure all decisions pertaining national health issues in Malaysia are supported with scientific evidences.

KEYWORDS: document utilisation, research priority, pharmacy, focus group discussion, thematic analysis