

Newsletter

August - September 2008 Edition

“To continually enhance the professional and business practices in community pharmacy to deliver optimal health outcomes.”

Contents

1 Service Excellence Training Can Make a Difference

3 Spotlight on The Standards

4 How Quality is Our Service?
- Telephone Survey
- e-QCPP Users Group
- The Quality Quest

SERVICE EXCELLENCE

Training Can Make a Difference

At APP this year, Jonar Nader spoke of the importance of service excellence. He described service excellence and described why businesses should ensure every customer is treated as if they were a celebrity. We know customers value pharmacy. Our challenge is to train our staff to ensure that every customer experience is excellent – the best it can possibly be for the customer and the pharmacy.

My daughter works in the hospitality industry; a service industry like pharmacy in many ways. When she started, she attended induction training and learnt about the culture of her five star hotel. The hotel's brand or point of difference is “warm, comforting connection” and she learnt how to deliver the hotel's brand of service quality or “touch point”. She now applies this training in her every day interaction with each and every customer. Training has ensured that she delivers excellent service.

Your business and your staff reach out and touch your customers too. In my daughter's case, when a regular customer visits she remembers their particular needs and preferences. She anticipates and provides a service to all guests that makes them feel special and want to return to the hotel to experience the “connection” again.



To me, this illustrates the value of knowing your pharmacies point of difference and training your staff to consistently provide your “brand” of excellent service to your customers.

In the July edition of the QCPP newsletter, I referred to QCPP accredited pharmacies recognising the value of trained staff. The QCPP training requirements can be used to achieve many things. For example:

- » Awareness of the importance of a quality service culture. This includes alignment of staff actions to fit your pharmacy's “this is how we do things around here” position;
- » Better patient outcomes through - improved staff product knowledge. Well trained staff provide more complete customer solutions and higher unit sales;
- » Alignment of knowledge across various roles, so staff can fill in when someone is sick or on holiday, and better trained after-hours staff; and

» Improved technical skills when introducing new technologies.

As you are aware by now, training in Pharmacy Medicines and Pharmacist Only Medicines became a mandatory requirement of the QCPP 2nd Edition as of 1 March 2008.

The Guild training unit was introduced in July 2007 and since then over 14,000 pharmacy assistants have demonstrated through training that they are competent using the S2/S3 protocols and assisting in the supply of these Scheduled medicines.

These pharmacy assistants are now better equipped to meet customers' medicine needs and should have no problem at all with the QCPP mystery shopper (or SMA) visit.

The “Mystery Shopper” program was introduced in 2002 in a joint venture between the Guild and the University of Sydney. Some excellent results have been demonstrated and in this month's newsletter I want to share a snapshot of results which clearly shows that QCPP makes a difference. (Refer to Figures 1 and 2). *cont. page 2*

Do you have a question about the QCPP Standards?

Call your Guild Branch to contact a QCPP State Manager or call the administration helpline 1300 363 340
website: www.qcpp.com

“To continually enhance the professional and business practices in community pharmacy to deliver optimal health outcomes.”

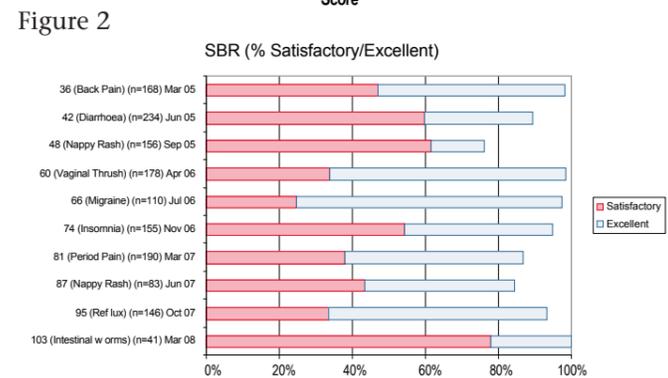
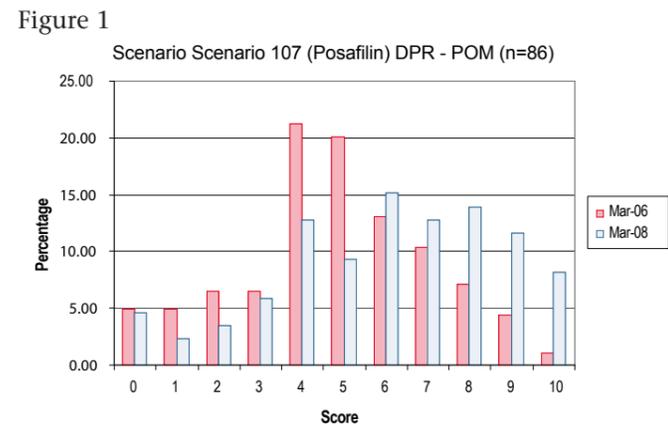


Fig. 1 DPR = Direct product request or brand name request
 Fig. 1 POM = Pharmacy Only Medicine
 Fig. 2 SBR = Symptom-based request

I also find it really satisfying that the number of pharmacies that receive an “Excellent” score on a mystery shopper visit has improved by over 50% since we started the program (Figure 3).

Pharmacists are responsible for \$2.5 billion of Scheduled medicines sales in Australia each year. You may be aware that the need for two separate Pharmacy Medicines and Pharmacist Only Medicines Schedules will be again reviewed by the Government in 2010. The

profession is on notice that we need to provide the evidence for keeping the two separate non-prescription medicine Schedules.

It is imperative that we demonstrate continual improvement in adherence to our standards. This can be evidenced by our “Mystery Shopper” program results.

Our results are great, but we cannot afford complacency. Training of staff is a key component to the success of your business in many areas.

Staff training is more than product knowledge – it’s the key to the “touch point” which produces the consistent high quality interaction – each time, every time. This has flow-on effects including:

- » Financial – effect on the bottom line;
- » Community health outcomes;
- » Staff satisfaction and loyalty; and
- » Building a culture to promote customer satisfaction and loyalty.

The June/July 2008 issue of Inside Retailing refers to the Westfield World Retail Study Tour (Westfield Top 30 www.insideretailing.com.au). The Study Tour rated retail stores but gave some dishonourable mentions to:

- » a retailer with no point of difference, tired layouts and no customer engagement
- » a retailer with inattentive customer service, poor store layout, and a dumbed-down fast selling, discounted product offer which alienated customers who wanted more.

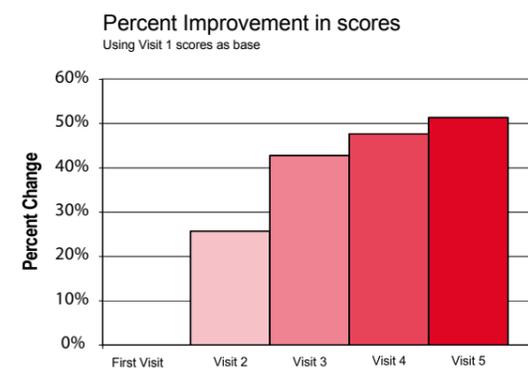
If you use a quality management system to its full effect, with good staff training, where your staff understand what to do, why they do it and how to do it, then you will never qualify for a dishonourable mention like these retailers.

Even if you are QCPP accredited, do some checking, and see where you can improve. Can you demonstrate that your pharmacy has improved over time? Use the “Mystery Shopper” program to think about what level of knowledge and service you want to provide and use the QCPP standards and staff training to improve. The aim for your pharmacy should be to consistently deliver service excellence at the customer “touch point”.

In this way you will not only improve your customer service, but demonstrate to government that pharmacy intervention does make a difference and the Australian pharmacy system continues to be world class.

By Jenny Bergin
 Director, Quality Care Pharmacy Program

Figure 3: Percent Improvement in scores



SPOTLIGHT ON THE STANDARDS

Standard 5.5 - Pharmacy Premises and Equipment, Vaccine Fridges

There are immense resources put into quality management systems around the world. Usually it is difficult for industries to show quantitative benefits of these systems, but Australian pharmacy does have some measures.

In pharmacy, in Australia, we are lucky enough to have several absolute proofs of the value of quality systems. Two of these proofs are discussed in this newsletter, but we will be examining more of them in future issues. The first and most obvious is the roll out of the S2/S3 training and the resulting improved measures of the Mystery Shopper program. See the discussion of these results elsewhere.

The proof I want to talk about in this edition is the use of the vaccine fridge. As the stability of vaccines is dependent upon refrigeration storage control, the QCPP protocol for Cold Chain Management requires that refrigerators are tested and approved and there is a the daily check of the temperature variation.

When QCPP was first launched into Australian pharmacies, the typical cold storage was a small home-style refrigerator. With these fridges there was usually no way of tracking the temperature variation over a day. They also have a tendency to sometimes freeze the contents. Freezing does not necessarily alter

the physical appearance of vaccine. As there is no visible detection possible for damage to the vaccine, refrigerators must be monitored daily.

The main problem with these units is their inability for fine control of temperature. The control systems of domestic refrigerators rely on a thermostat and the timing of the compressor being turned on and off. In the small units there is usually no fan to distribute the temperature uniformly. With this type of control system there are wide temperature variations through the day and within the unit. Occasionally some areas in the fridge will drop below freezing.

We are aware that vaccines are delicate biological substances that require a cold environment for efficacy to be maintained. However, they do not tolerate freezing. When a vaccine drops below zero degrees the vaccine must be discarded.

There are ways of using and modifying domestic refrigerators to project the vaccines but then value of using an easy-to-find unit is lost. Refer to Department of Health and Ageing publication “Strive for 5”.

Vaccine refrigerators are made to not freeze and meet the requirements of vaccine storage. They maintain the temperature in the desired range of 2°C – 8°C (5°C +/- 3°C) uniformly within the unit. With a vaccine fridge and the other recommendations for maintaining the Cold Chain, the vaccines are assured of being effective when supplied to the patient.

As part of the approved process, the fridge also keeps a log of the maximum and minimum temperatures of the fridge. An alarm sounds when the temperature creeps outside the control range.

The maximum and minimum temperature of the fridge is recorded each day as one of the requirements of the QCPP standard. By checking this recording, the pharmacy is immediately alerted to a malfunction of the fridge. When an incident occurs, corrective action can be taken before the vaccine spoils.

Over the ten years of the QCPP program virtually all pharmacies have installed an approved vaccine fridge. The industry now justifiably has a reputation of providing a high standard of service to the patient, in the supply of vaccines.

The correct storage of vaccines ensures better patient outcome.

The other benefit is the savings that the pharmacy makes from not having to discard damaged vaccine stock. There is no precise measure of the value of stock held in a typical pharmacy vaccine fridge, however it is estimated to be between \$3,000 and \$5,000. If the fridge freezes the stock, then the stock must be destroyed as it is not longer viable. That’s over \$3000 which then needs to be claimed on insurance.

With just over 5,000 pharmacies in Australia and an average of \$4,000 dollars of stock in the fridge, we as an industry have \$20 million of product at any time which we

need to protect. That’s 20 million good reasons why QCPP helps the community by storing medicines under optimal conditions.

Approved vaccine refrigerators are good for the patient and are good for pharmacy. This is a real benefit to the community and the use of vaccine refrigerators has been driven in pharmacy by QCPP.

By Peter Reeves
 National Manager Assessments, Quality Care Pharmacy Program

Helpful Tips for keeping your fridge healthy and lasting longer

» Clean your door seals with a warm aqueous solution of sodium bicarbonate. Keeping the seals free of grime will help them last longer.

» Consider having your vaccine refrigerator serviced every 18-24 months.

» Over filling the fridge can obstruct air circulation and stop it from working properly.

» Condenser coils need proper airflow and should be kept free of dust and debris. Try to clean the coils by gently using a vacuum, broom or clean cloth every month.

» Vaccine refrigerators need space. There should be a 10cm (minimum) space at the top, sides and back of your vaccine refrigerator.

HOW QUALITY IS OUR SERVICE?

At the moment there are more ways to get help with the Quality Care Pharmacy Program than ever before. Some of the help available, like the personal service of our State Managers has been around since the beginning of the program where others, like the Fast Track and e-QCPP online tool are relatively new.

We want to ensure that all the products and services, developed to assist members obtain and maintain their accreditation, operate in the best possible way and whether there is anything that can be done to improve our assistance to you. That's why the program in undertaking two initiatives to gather feedback from QCPP members.

Telephone Survey - No: 739, AAA Guild Rating

During the month of September a telephone survey will be conducted by Orima Research on behalf of the QCPP. The survey will gather information about QCPP support resources to determine their value to members and provide us with some ideas on how we could improve them.

It would be greatly appreciated if you could spare some time to assist the survey team, if they call your pharmacy.

e-QCPP National Users Group

A National Users Group has recently been formed so that staff who use the e-QCPP tool can assist us to improve the software and develop new functionality so the tool better meets the needs of pharmacies.

The QCPP recently asked all e-QCPP users if they would be interested in being involved. 11 pharmacies were chosen from the responses to represent a cross section of pharmacy.

This new Group will meet by teleconference for one hour four times over the next 12 months. The teleconferences will be an opportunity to provide feedback to the e-QCPP team so that additional features or improvements can be made, if required. Occasionally the users group will be asked to test specific updates to the e-QCPP software.

the Quality Quest 2009

How healthy is your pharmacy?

As a means of developing a culture of continuous quality improvement, the QCPP is offering a small number of pharmacies the opportunity to have a quality improvement expert appraise your business to help achieve your goals.

The quality improvement tools and the process used will form the basis for a preconference workshop at APP next year.

QCPP will cover the costs of the consultant, however a condition of involvement in the Quality Quest is that you are happy for the experience to be a "case study" for others to share and learn from.

If you are interested to be a part of the Quest, please send us a short email of 200 words or less to tim.mclaren@guild.org.au by Friday 17th October, containing your pharmacy details, why you would like to be involved and your agreement to have the experience presented at APP.

- » Would you like to improve your pharmacy business?
- » Would you like the services of a quality improvement expert to work with your business over 5 – 7 days to help you achieve your goal?
- » Would you be happy to share your learning with other pharmacies at APP in April next year?



Register now!

A chance for a free professional consultation for your pharmacy business

If you have any questions about the Quality Quest, please call Cath Blunt on 02 6270 1888

QCPP STATE MANAGERS CONTACT INFORMATION

ACT	NSW	NT	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA
Sally Cameron 02 6270 1870	Meryl Kane 02 9467 7120	Vicki Hulands 08 8982 1024	Sally Dickinson 07 3831 3788	Gillian Starr 08 8304 8300	Sally Davis 03 6220 2955	Robert Huddle 03 9810 9999	Cathie Marshall 07 3831 3788