

British Pharmaceutical Students' Association

Mental Health and Wellbeing

Supporting the future workforce

August 2020

www.bpsa.co.uk



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British Pharmaceutical Students' Association
The Official Student Organisation of the Royal Pharmaceutical Society

Introduction/Overview

1 in 4 people will experience a mental health problem and 1 in 8 young people will experience a mental health problem¹. This year the Royal Pharmaceutical (RPS) society published results from their wellbeing survey that showed the pressures the pharmacy workforce is facing and the impact this has had on their wellbeing². To avoid this in future pharmacy professionals it is vital that proactive approaches to wellbeing are taken to protect the future workforce.

The call for support of the mental health of the pharmacy profession both future and current occurred at our 76th Annual Conference at Keele University. The following motion was passed unanimously by a delegation of 57: 'As an Association we believe that supporting the mental health of pharmacists, pre-registration trainees and pharmacy students is of the utmost importance'⁷. It was expressed by students that "If we cannot take care of our own wellbeing, how do we work well as future professionals and provide a high standard of care".

As a result, we have been working to create an environment where students feel comfortable about speaking about their own experiences of mental health earlier so that they receive the support they need to help prevent burn out in the future. We ran our Mental Health Campaign from the 5th of February till the 6th of March where we invited our members to share their stories around mental health. Whilst each story was individual, similarities emerged that tied them all together.

To guide our work on wellbeing, particularly during the disruption caused to education and training programmes due to Covid-19 pandemic, we produced a survey in partnership with Pharmacist Support to better understand students' experiences of mental health and to help identify ways to provide them with the most appropriate support. The results from the survey identified that the need for wellbeing support for pharmacy students and pre-registration pharmacists was required more than ever.

In addition, the survey also revealed the extent to which stigma is impacting individual's abilities to speak about their mental health and take action. This is something that needs greater work to address in order to produce future professionals that feel confident to speak up when they need support. As an Association we believe that mental health is of the utmost importance and will continue to advocate this, working to reduce stigma and support the future profession.

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Summary of Key Points

1. Wellbeing concerns are prevalent prior to joining the pharmacy profession thus it is vital we proactively tackle this to avoid future burn out.
2. Stigma is a barrier to pharmacy students and pre-registration pharmacists seeking support for their mental health and wellbeing.
3. Universities provide key support for students with their services and environment.
4. The disruptions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic has left students and pre-registration pharmacists feeling uncertain and fearful for the future.
5. The closure of university buildings as a result of the pandemic has had a significant impact on individuals mental health.
6. The demands of the pharmacy degree and pre-registration training limit students and pre-registration pharmacists' ability to prioritise their wellbeing
7. 56% of individuals know how to look after their wellbeing, however only 15% of students and pre-registration pharmacists' currently use existing support services.

Summary of Key Recommendations

1. The approach to mental health and wellbeing being must be proactive not reactive.
2. With the movement towards blended learning it is vital considerations are made for individuals whose studies will be impacted because of this. Circumstances including but not limited to, working environment at home and financial impact may affect certain individuals therefore certain accommodations must be made to support such students.
3. Clear consistent communication must be provided to prevent feelings of fear and uncertainty. This can be as simple as acknowledging concerns and assuring students that issues are being discussed.
4. Clarification around mental health and fitness to practice is vital to reduce stigma around voicing concerns.
5. Stigma is still prevalent and its vital that the whole pharmacy community actively works to tackle this, in order to create a culture where mental health can be openly discussed and viewed in the same way as any physical ailment.
6. The BPSA and other organisations must do more to advertise existing support mechanisms for pharmacy students and pre-registration pharmacists
7. Schools of pharmacy must recognise that it is important to provide complementary and non-stigmatizing support as mental health can impact individuals learning and vice versa ⁸ and act according to this.
8. Pharmacy training needs to be reshaped to allow students to feel they can be more open about their mental health. Robert et al expressed that students with mental health problems are individuals whose fundamental humanity and strength will enable them to be empathetic physicians ¹⁰



Methods

Share your story Design

The form was composed of 3 open ended response questions as follows: 'Tell us about your story', 'What support, if any have you had?', 'What impact has your mental health had on you studies as a pharmacy student?'

Demographics collected included year of study and school of pharmacy. These were optional and no identifiable information was requested. Respondents were invited to share their story in as much detail as they felt comfortable and providing personal information was optional. Respondents had the option to leave their contact information if they wished to be contacted further. Data was gathered prior to the Covid-19 outbreak.

Support emails

A dedicated email was created to invite members to share their views and feedback. Emails were labelled according to common themes identified. These were inputted into a google sheet where the responsible member of the Executive would input the responses under the various themes.

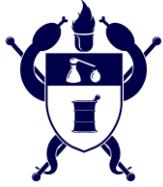
Survey Design

The survey was composed of 4 sections: Demographics, Impact, Support, and Challenges. All questions were set as optional allowing respondents to disclose as much as they felt comfortable with. The design included a variety of questions, the main question type was modelled on a Likert Scale (strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree). Additional questions included "tick all that apply" and opportunities to provide further detail around support and additional comments.

Statistical Analysis

Chi-squared calculations were carried out at a significance level of 0.05 ($\alpha=0.05$) to determine three levels of significance within questions modelled on the Likert Scale. These present whether there are statistically significant differences at the following 3 levels.

- 1) If there are any statistically significant differences between any option



2) If there are any statistically significant differences between the three groups below:

- a) 'Very Good' and 'Good' = ' Σ good'
- b) 'Very Poor' and 'Poor' = ' Σ poor'
- c) 'Neutral' = 'Neutral'

3) If there is a statistically significant difference between the two groups below:

- a) 'Very Good' and 'Good' = ' Σ good'
- b) 'Very Poor' and 'Poor' = ' Σ poor'

Figure captions contain information about statistical significance for figures where Chi-squared statistical tests have been applied. The caption relates to the three levels of significance e.g. "(Statistical significance, 1: Yes, 2: Yes, 3: Yes)" indicates that all levels of significance have been satisfied for the data in the figure.

During statistical analysis, responses to questions that were "N/A" were omitted from chi-squared calculations as these were viewed the same as no response to the question.

With 11,975 pharmacy students and pre-registration pharmacists, there is a 99% confidence level with a 5% margin of error that a sample of 644 would represent this whole group.



Impact

Covid-19 Pandemic

Mental wellbeing is unique to every individual and can be impacted by a multitude of confounding factors. In this current Covid-19 pandemic it was identified that there has been a significant impact on students and pre-registration pharmacist's wellbeing with 61.6% reporting that it has had a negative impact on their training and learning experience. It was also reported that 66% of respondents have experienced an increase in anxiety and 78.6% experienced low mood/energy since the pandemic. Reasons for this may include the increased demand and uncertainty around a multitude of factors. In written responses it was expressed that "The uncertainty and lack of knowing what is coming really isn't helpful. Even knowing when we will know more or regular updates even if nothing major to update us on would be helpful". As a result, it is vital that clear consistent communication is provided to acknowledge their concerns and assure them that their voices being heard.

1 – Since the COVID-19 Outbreak, I have been worrying about (tick all that apply)

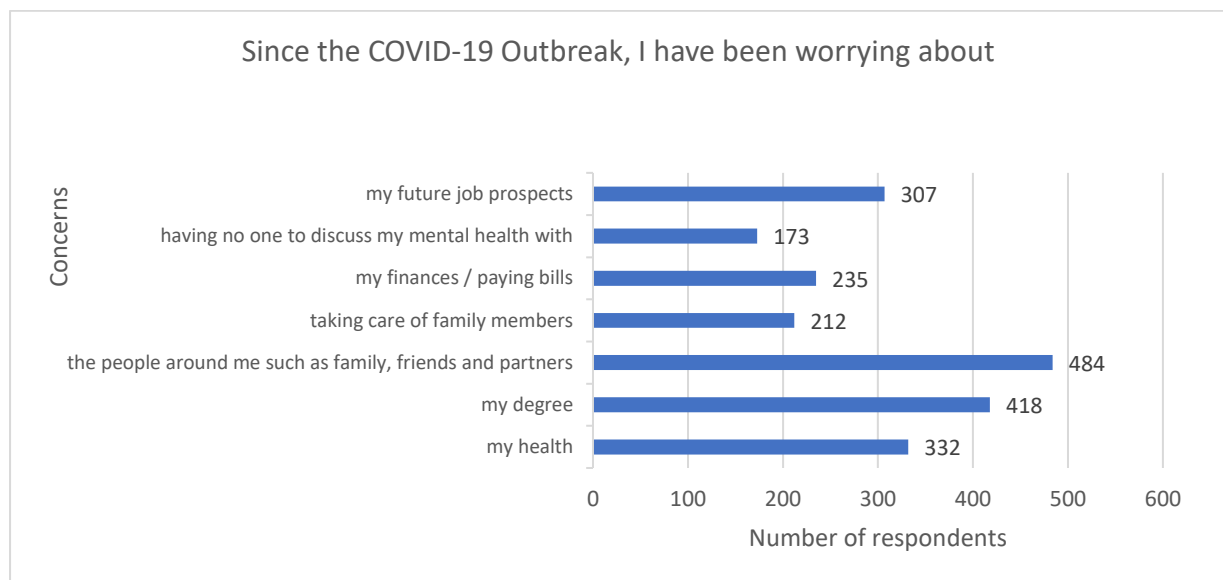


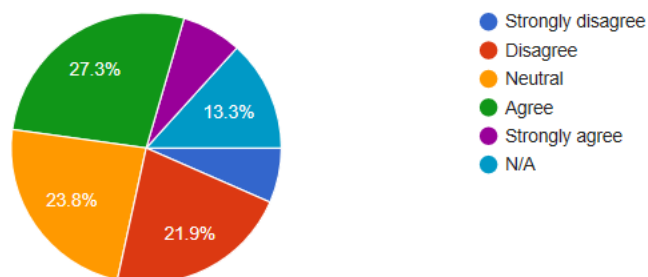
Figure 1: Concerns that respondents have experienced since the Covid-19 outbreak (number of respondents 629).

Some of the factors contributing to the increase in anxiety are shown in figure 1. It showed that the uncertainty around the future is a key contributor to this increase in anxiety. Whether this is future job prospects, the future of their pharmacy degree and how teaching will look or their future financial situation. The concern of uncertainty was further raised in the additional comments with the response "Please we need clarification, what's going to



happen to us? How are we going to pay for our bills?”. In addition, the concerns for family and friends and their own health during this pandemic further contribute to the levels of anxiety. While the latter is not something, we can modify we can ease concerns by providing regular updates, listening to concerns and ensuring voices are heard and represented. The various situations presented by respondents are individual however the impact on their health show similarities. It was expressed that “life has been extremely difficult- on my mental and physical wellbeing and that of my children as well as prioritising their care in all aspects”. It is inevitable that the current situation has aroused anxieties and worries but as we move towards a new model of everyday life and learning it is as important as ever we look at how information is conveyed and how the future pharmacy profession is supported during this.

2 – I am finding productive ways to spend my time since the closure of university



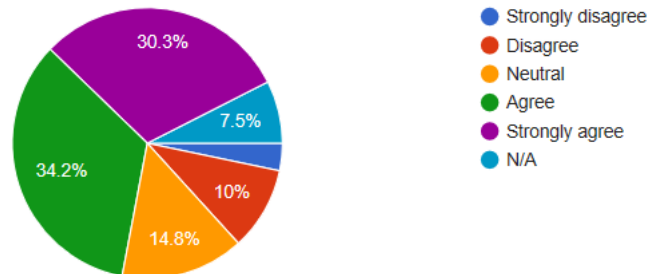
There was no clear opinion on whether respondents felt they had found productive ways to spend their time since lock down , (number of respondents including N/A: 640), (statistical significance: 1: Yes, 2: Yes, 3: No).

The variation expressed above may be a result of the individuality of each student's situation. The Covid-19 outbreak has put a great demand on the pharmacy workforce as at least 350 students* (Health Education England) have been working to support the workforce and pre-registration pharmacists are already on the frontline. Other students are faced with moving back home and the challenges set out by this. It was identified that 24.5% of respondents felt as though they were finding productive ways to spend their time.

*number of students recorded on HEE volunteer portal, it is likely that this number is higher as students may have existing part-time jobs or sourced opportunities outside of the portal.



3 – Staying at home has made me feel isolated



It was identified that staying at home has resulted in individuals feeling isolated, (number of respondents including N/A: 643), (statistical significance: 1: Yes, 2: Yes, 3: Yes).

Respondents overwhelmingly agreed that staying at home has made them feel isolated. In the written responses it was reported “Last week started drinking a little every day because feel out of sorts and I dislike that...It's not normal to have a 'holiday period' without leaving the house or seeing friends”. The requirement to stay in isolation and not have the environment in university or libraries to focus or socialise has a clear impact. Also, the requirement to shield to protect their health or someone else's health resulting in isolation and increased anxieties.

It has been identified that 56% of individuals know how to look after their wellbeing, however only 15% of respondents currently use existing support services. This may mean that when circumstances such as the current COVID-19 pandemic arise, students are less prepared for the impact this will have on their wellbeing and without experience of previous support and knowledge of services. This can take its toll.

“The Pharmacy degree is difficult. I am capable, being in final year. The COVID-19 situation has taken me away from a learning environment which was tailored to my needs. I am from a background where higher education is not common option. This means that I have no support at home.”



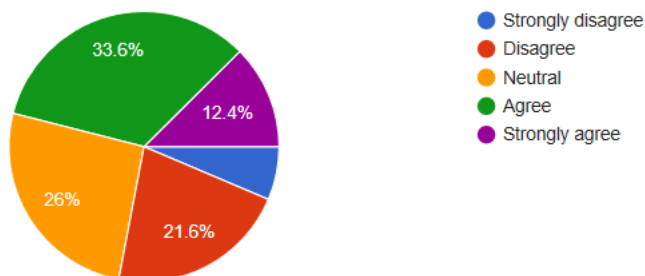
Key Point Number 1

The COVID-19 outbreak has significantly impacted student's and pre-registration Pharmacists wellbeing.

Relationships

While the recent outbreak has had an impact of the wellbeing of individuals there is also the consideration of the impact that mental health and wellbeing concerns have on an individual's life. It was identified that wellbeing has impacted individual's relationships. While this may not be something that can directly be resolved, it is known that supportive relationships with friends and family is beneficial to mental health¹¹.

4 – My wellbeing has impacted my relationships



It was identified that wellbeing has an impact on respondents' relationships (number of respondents: 643), (statistical significance: 1: Yes, 2: Yes, 3: Yes).



Pre- Registration Pharmacists.

There has been a significant impact on pre-registration pharmacist's wellbeing during the Covid-19 outbreak. The BPSA opened a support email inviting trainees to express their concerns and views. The email received 433 responses from the end of march till the end of July.

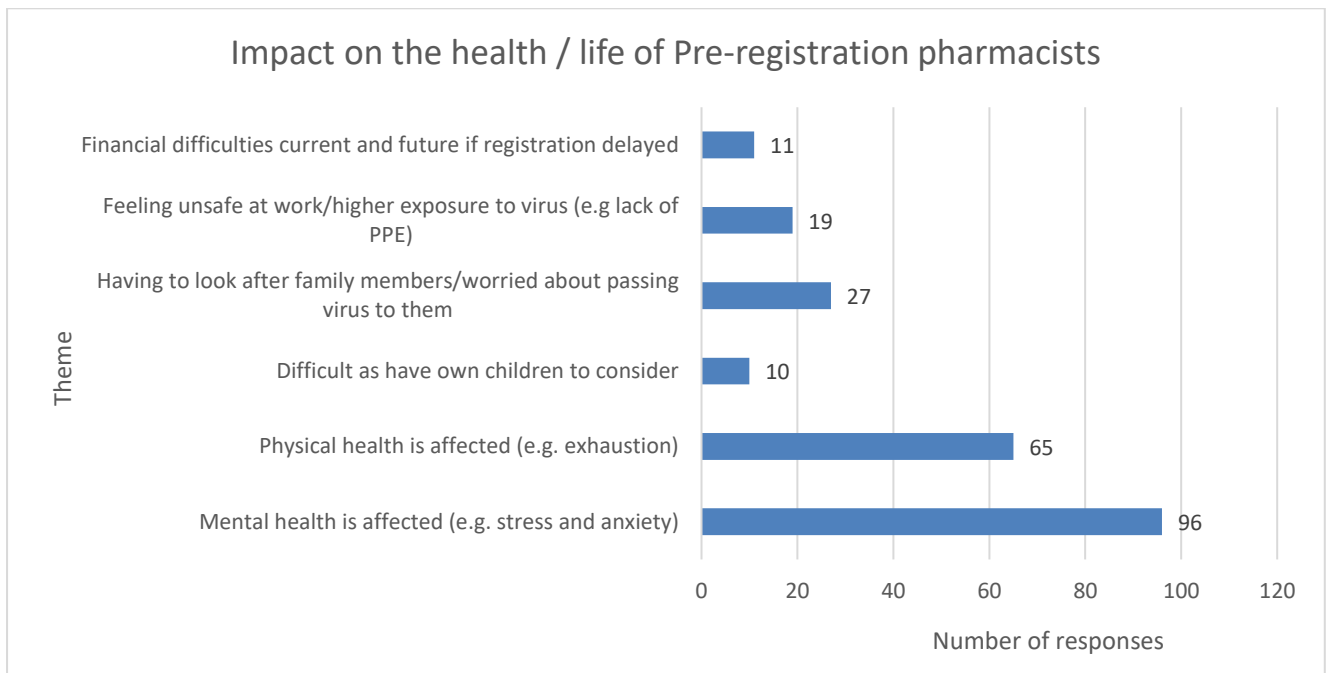


Figure 4 - Common themes expressed from Pre-Registration Pharmacists through the BPSA support email

Key Point Number - 2

Pre-registration pharmacist's wellbeing has been significantly impacted as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak. Concerns around their future (job prospects, finances) along with working on the frontline has caused an increasing level of anxiety, stress, and uncertainty

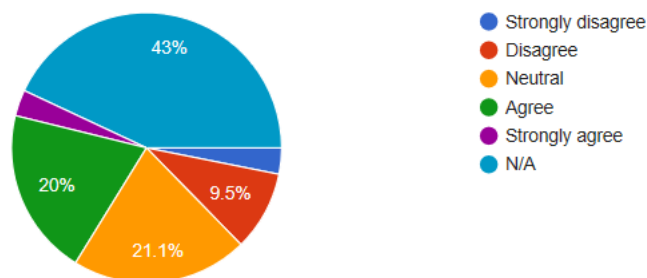


result, students may be driven to access private services which have an additional financial implication.

In addition, barriers to receiving support included a lack of awareness of the support available, a previously negative experience with support services and the stigma around speaking out.

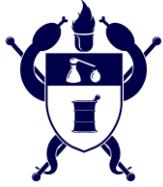
“Most free services (like that at university and some charities) have huge waiting times and are then limited to 6 weeks maximum. However private services are expensive, especially for students/pre-reg pharmacists who may already be struggling financially.”

6 – The support available does not conflict with my schedule



The majority of respondents do not feel the support available conflicts with their schedule (number of respondents including N/A: 639), (statistical significance: 1: Yes, 2: Yes, 3: Yes).

The pharmacy degree requires a certain amount of contact time, as a result student may miss out on the opportunity to receive supports as their classes, work or extracurriculars conflict with the university support schedules. Of those surveyed the consensus was that the support does not conflict with their schedule. However, 22.25% of the 364 respondents who did not respond with N/A felt as though the services did conflict with their schedule. It is vital we strive towards support for all and develop positive wellbeing and emotional intelligence³.



“At my university there is mental health support, but many people struggle to get there, especially as its understaffed.”

“My parents, my boyfriend and my peers were a strong support network. But a mental issue can only be truly resolved internally so I remembered to give myself time to breathe. I stopped comparing myself to others, I also remembered I was trying my hardest.”

Key Point Number 3

There is a spectrum of experiences in regard to support. With the current impact identified and the possible movement to blended learning it is important that support services are reviewed to account for this.

It was highlighted that individual's wellbeing is impacted by the time of year, that being periods of examinations and deadlines. As a result, it is vital that mental health support is promoted and integrated into education prior to it being required. A proactive approach to mental health and wellbeing must happen. By early intervention, resilience and knowledge of support can be built before it becomes 'that bad'

“Anxiety would keep me awake every single night during my exam season”



7 – Times of year mental health is impacted

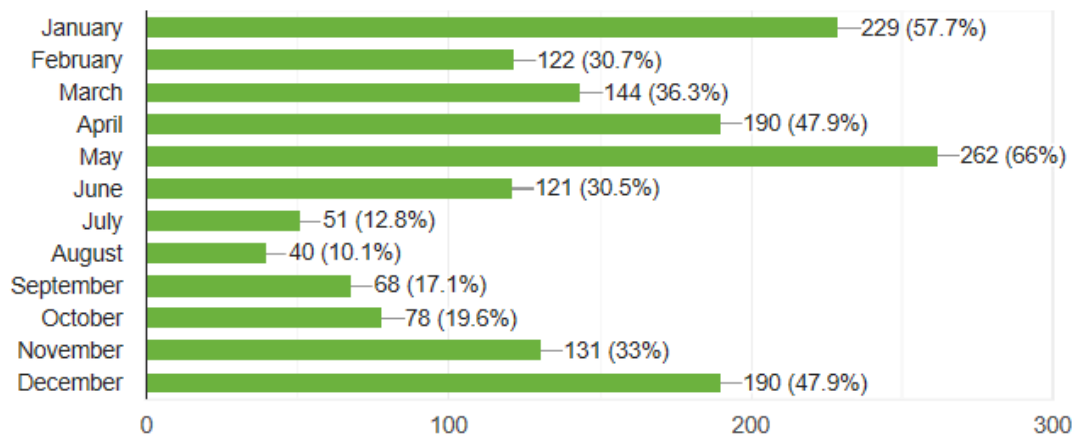


Figure 7: The times of year respondents feel their wellbeing / mental health is impacted

The BPSA recommend that mental health services are reviewed and re-evaluated considering the significant impact that has occurred as a result of the pandemic and social isolation and pre-empt an increase in demand. The financial implication of students must be considered when implementing support.

“We haven’t been signposted to any one we can talk to if we’re feeling overwhelmed”.

The misunderstanding of the term mental health can lead to people not reaching out for help. Everyone has mental health in the way everyone has physical health⁴. The idea that mental health has connotation with mental illnesses can lead to people not speaking out about their stress as it is not perceived “bad enough” as a result this leads to burn out further down the line. One of the stories shared reported that they felt “other people had it worse and I needed to get over myself”. A respondent to the survey expressed their concerns around speaking about their mental health “it may not be diagnosed because I am too anxious to even speak to a GP”. This suggests that without a diagnosis people do not believe that they can easily voice their concerns. 34.6% of respondents expressed interest in a listening service staffed by fellow

pharmacists. The BPSA recommends the use, promotion, and further development of listening services whether they are via telephone or an online chat platform. The earlier people feel comfortable voicing concerns the greater impact it will have on individuals as future professionals.

“I am now a fully qualified pharmacist and I know it would not have been possible without the support.”



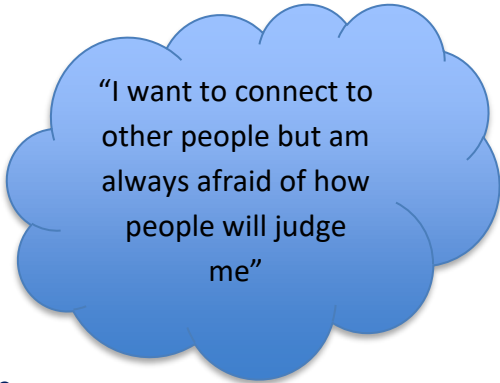
Key Point Number - 4

It is vital we have a proactive not reactive approach to wellbeing support, ensuring services are inclusive and readily promoted

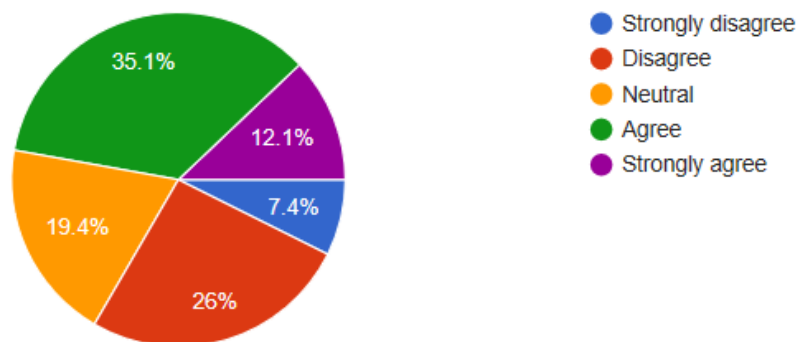
Challenges

Stigma

The stigma around mental health is as prevalent as ever in the future pharmacy profession. This could be presented as stigma from external places or an internalised stigma due to the expectations set out as a future professional. We invited students to share their stories around mental health in the aim to create a culture where students feel they can speak comfortably about their mental health. Many students shared a fear of speaking out, asking for help, or discussing their diagnosis, with ideas around how people would perceive them both personally and professionally being at the heart of most concerns. Following on from this it was identified that 47.2% of individuals surveyed experienced stigma. Mental Health does not discriminate, and thus support must not either.



8 – Stigma affects my ability to speak about my wellbeing / mental health



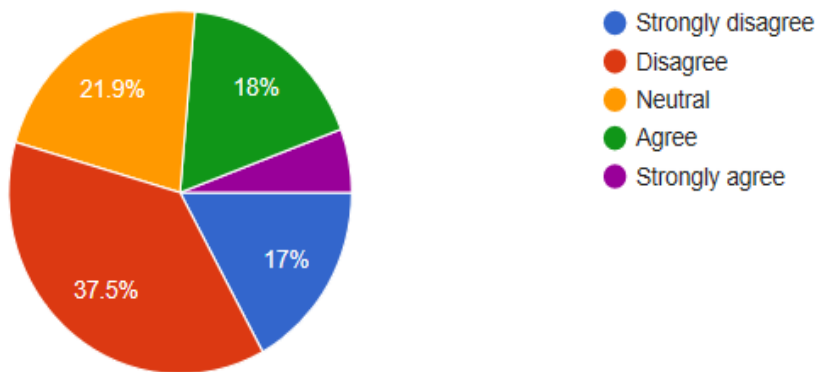
The majority of respondents felt as though stigma affected their ability to speak about their wellbeing / mental health., (number of respondents: 638), (statistical significance: 1: Yes, 2: Yes, 3: Yes)



“Mental Illness is not a personal failure. In fact, if there is a failure, it is to be found in the way we gave responded to people with mental and brain disorder ⁵” – *World Health Organisation (Mental Health: New Understanding, New Hope)*

A proportion of respondents reported experiencing stigma from their peers and colleagues. This leads to the concern that this may also be experienced by patients. As a result, we must take steps to consolidate education around mental health and challenge stigma in order to support patients and the profession.

9 – I have experienced stigma from my peers / colleagues



The majority of respondents did not feel as though they had experienced stigma from their peers / colleagues., (number of respondents: 635), (statistical significance: 1: Yes, 2: Yes, 3: Yes).

5. World Health Organisation. Mental disorders affect one in four people [Internet]. 2001. Available from: https://www.who.int/whr/2001/media_centre/press_release/en/



“the next time I would feel anxious for days, unable to explain why to my friends.”

“I have suffered from anxiety for as long as I can remember but recently built up the courage to talk about my mental health. Let me say that is one decision I made after thinking about it a lot, and something I have not regretted. I think it is important that other students like me are encouraged to speak up and get as much help as they can get.”

“I lost the passion for studying”

“My mental health and my experience with depression fuelled my decision to study pharmacy. I wanted to know why so many of us suffer or have a mental illness. Because I went through it, I am able to empathize with those who have mental health issues and I'm a passionate advocate for speaking out about these illnesses and to reduce the stigma surrounding them”

“The biggest issue I have is feeling like I have to hide my diagnosis from people...I'm just like everyone else, I just have periods where I need a break. It does not affect my ability to study, if anything it makes me more empathetic of others and their feelings.”



Fitness to Practice

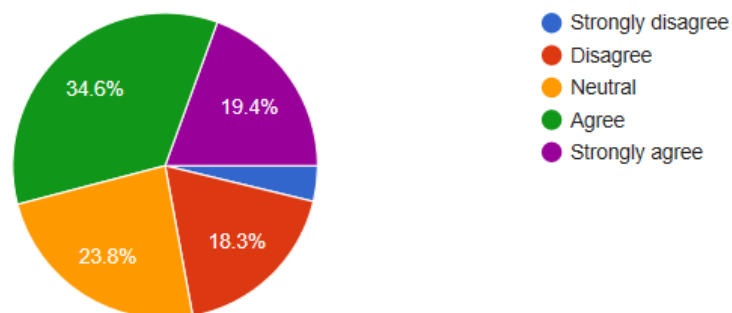
The fear that mental health concerns will make you not fit to practice is shared by 213 respondents. There is a culture that if you admit you are struggling or need help you cannot do your job properly. In a profession where your role is to help other people how can you admit you need help when your purpose is to help others. 'How do I mention I have anxiety when working in a pharmacy' was a concern expressed by a survey respondent. It has been expressed that experience of mental health has fuelled people to study pharmacy and help others. One individual shared that "Because I went through it, I am able to empathize with those who have mental health issues and I'm a passionate advocate for speaking out about these illnesses and to reduce the stigma surrounding them"

"Admitting you're unhealthy as a healthcare professional is, well, unprofessional... and I can't even attempt suicide, I can only complete it, otherwise what kind of a professional am I. It is scary, I don't want anyone to know about how low I feel and how stupid it makes me feel. What if they say I'm not fit to practice."

Demands

The training to become a pharmacy professional is not without its challenges. However, struggling with mental health can make this more challenging or the demands can result in an impact on student's wellbeing.

9 – The demands of my learning / training limit my ability to look after my wellbeing.



The majority of respondents found that the demands of their learning / training limit their ability to look after their wellbeing., (number of respondents: 638), (statistical significance: 1: Yes, 2: Yes, 3: Yes).



There should not have to be a choice between doing well and looking after your wellbeing. It was expressed that students feel they do not have time to prioritise their wellbeing or feel guilty if they prioritise their wellbeing over studying. It was identified that mental health is common within the student population, and often present prior to higher education⁶. It is suggested that early intervention may reduce burnout and be beneficial for individual's education

The RPS's Workforce wellbeing survey² found that 80% of those surveyed felt as though they were at a high risk of burnout. If this is something already present in the future workforce it is vital, we take the steps to proactively approach this.

The BPSA advocates that further emphasis is put on treating mental health the same way as physical health and that this is emphasised throughout student's learning and training. This was discussed at the 76th Annual Conference. It was expressed how "[mental health] needs to be normalised to the degree of a condition such as hypertension". Furthermore it was highlighted how the mental health curriculum highlights the main mental health conditions where as "less dramatic instances are ignored" and as future pharmacists we "need to be able to spot warning signs, and know the appropriate ways to intervene". By taking steps to increased education and exposure to mental health, it will be beneficial to our future patients and additionally students as emotionally aware professionals.

"As a student, if you are feeling incredibly low in mood, how can you focus on learning?"

'This Association believes that the MPharm curriculum should teach students how to recognise and respond to mental health conditions' (2018)⁷

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<https://www.rpharms.com/about-us/news/details/Pharmacists-suffer-the-mental-health-consequences-of-workplace-pressures>

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"In my case, stress is usually a trigger which is exhausting to cope with when pursuing this degree"

"I sometimes struggle to cope with my workload. I feel like I have no time to focus on my mental health and wellbeing because I'm too fixated on exams."

"As much as I do feel grateful to be a pharmacy student, it is emotionally and physically draining".

"Sadly, the MPharm is so stressful that I find my anxiety and depression returning in bouts."

"The stress of my studies often made me suffer in quiet".

"The third-year lectures were clearly linked to my condition so made me feel worse and brought back old memories as a child."



Summary of References

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<https://escr.ukri.org/files/news-events-and-publications/evidence-briefings/mental-health-and-social-relationships/>

Using This Document



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Authorship

If not solely authored by the BPSA/President, then the others should be recognised here.

About the BPSA

Founded in 1942, the British Pharmaceutical Students' Association is in its 71st year and is the only organisation that solely represents pharmacy students and pre-registration trainee pharmacists across Britain. As the official student organisation of the Royal Pharmaceutical Society, the BPSA aims to promote the interests and welfare of pharmacy students. The BPSA regularly represents students' views in the wider pharmacy media, in consultation responses and in meetings with individual stakeholder organisations.

As well as represent pharmacy students, we aim to educate, support, and entertain our members. We organise a comprehensive range of events and services throughout the year, so there is something for everyone to get involved in.

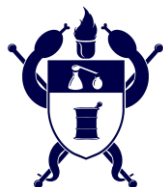
We have an Executive which coordinates the running of all our events and services, and they are supported by a network of BPSA National Representatives which are in every school of pharmacy.

Media Enquiries

Media enquiries can be made to the following members of the BPSA Executive:

- president@bpsa.co.uk
- pro@bpsa.co.uk

Appendix

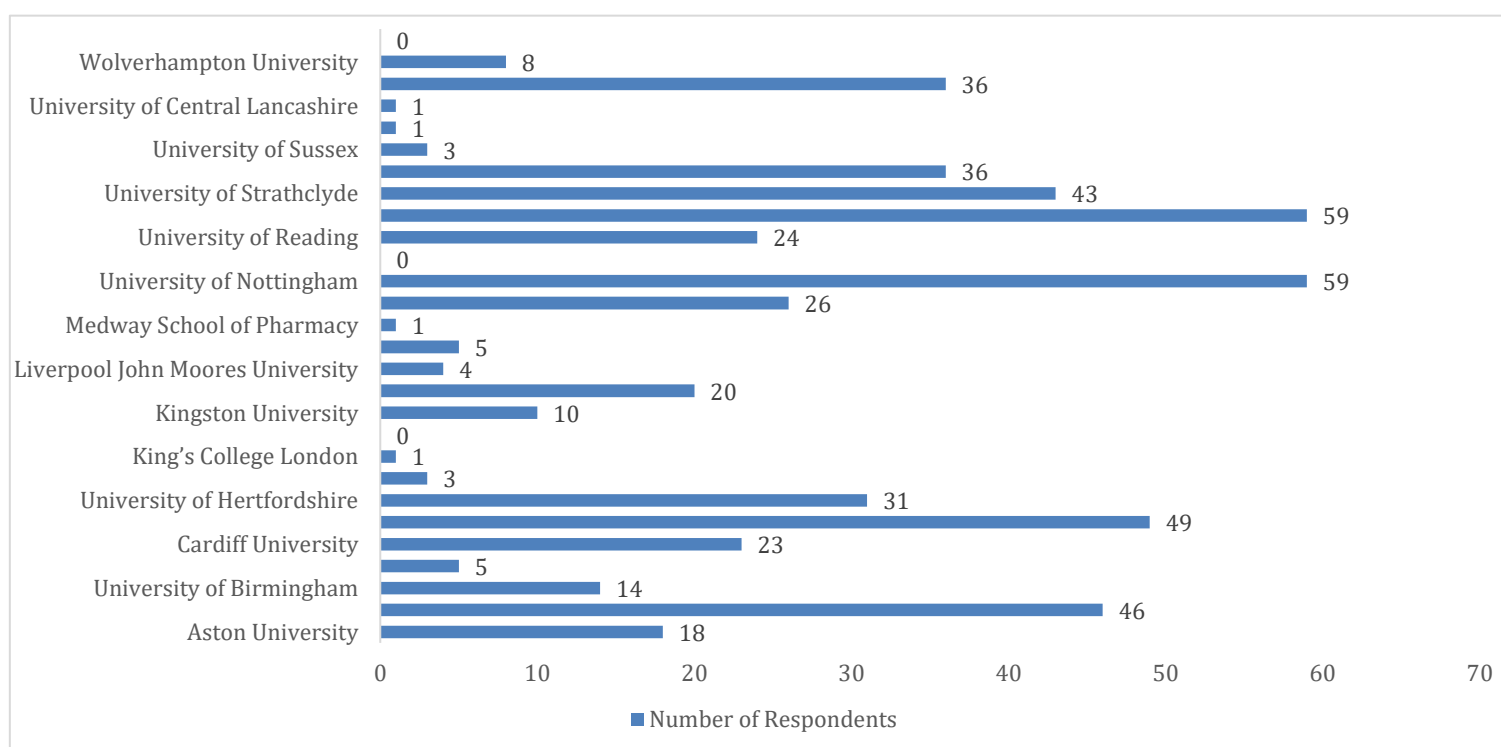


The data collected was both quantitative and qualitative. Qualitative data was gathered through a google form of open questions where individuals could share their story and responses collected from the BPSA support emails.

The survey was designed and hosted as a google form and distributed through various forms of social media. The survey was split into 4 sections: demographics, impact, support, and challenges. A total of 644 responses were received across all stages of practice and from every university.

Section 1 gathered information on school of pharmacy, year of study and sector of work. These questions were optional.

Year of study	Number of Respondents
First	118
Second	132
Third	136
Fourth	130
Fifth (if integrated degree)	9
Pre-Registration	175





Section 2 gathered information on how the COVID 19 pandemic has affected wellbeing, the impact their wellbeing has on their life and any specific times this impact occurs. These were as followed:

Since the covid-19 outbreak I have been:

- feeling down, depressed, or hopeless
- feeling nervous or anxious
- experiencing trouble with sleep
- bothered by poor appetite or overeating
- experiencing trouble relaxing
- struggling to keep active
- experiencing low motivation and energy levels
- None of the above

Since the covid-19 outbreak, I have been worrying about:

- My health
- My degree
- The people around me such as family, friends, and partners
- Taking care of family members
- My finances/paying bills
- Having no one to discuss my mental health with
- My future job prospects

I am struggling to concentrate on my studies due to the closure of university / increased pressure at pre-registration workplace.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Staying at home has made me feel isolated.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree



I am finding productive ways to fill my time since the closure of university.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

I feel like the covid-19 outbreak has negatively affected my training experience.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

My wellbeing has impacted my relationships.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

There are specific times in the year where my wellbeing is negatively affected.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

These Include

- January
- February
- March
- April
- May
- June
- July
- August
- September
- October
- November
- December



Section 3 gathered information on the individuals experience and knowledge of support services and their capabilities in accessing these. These were as followed:

I know how to look after my wellbeing.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

I use existing support services to help with my wellbeing.

- Yes
- No

If the answer is yes, please state where below:

The social media channels I use most are (please tick all that apply to you):

- Instagram
- Facebook
- Twitter
- YouTube
- Other

Pharmacist Support are looking to develop some MPharm student / Pre-registration trainee specific wellbeing resources. What type of information might you find useful (please tick all that apply to you)?

- Regular Wellbeing tops and tools via email
- Social media tips
- E-learning modules
- Apps
- Online fact sheets
- Vlogs & blogs
- Getting information on discounts and promotions available for pharmacy students/NHS pre-registration pharmacists
- Information on volunteering opportunities
- A listening service - staffed by fellow students/pharmacists

I know of how to access the support services within my university/workplace.

- Strongly disagree



- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

I feel able to access the support within my place of learning.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

I have had a positive experience with the support services within my university/workplace.

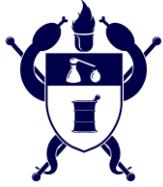
- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree
- N/A

The support available does not conflict with my schedule.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree
- N/A

The types of support I have experienced include (please tick all that apply to you):

- Friends
- Family
- University
- GP/other healthcare professional
- Pharmacist Support
- Other charities
- Apps
- N/A



Section 4 aimed to identify the challenges and barriers that you face in regard to your mental health and wellbeing.

I feel I can voice my concerns around my wellbeing / mental health.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

I feel comfortable voicing my wellbeing concerns to a family member.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

I would know if my wellbeing was affecting my fitness to practice.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

I worry about voicing concerns about my wellbeing for fear of fitness to practice.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Stigma affects my ability to speak about my wellbeing / mental health.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

I have experienced stigma from my peers / colleagues.

- Strongly disagree



- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

The demands of my learning / training limit my ability to look after my wellbeing.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Additional comments given include:

- Lack of communication/uncertainty affects wellbeing
- The fact that university tuition fees still need to be paid in full despite the reduced service of education we will be receiving after the pandemic is really hard to come to terms with and affects my mental health. I think more should be done to appeal the decision that has been made and we all should be getting at least a partial refund of tuition fees
- Working in a pharmacy and abuse from patients has a huge impact on all pharmacy staff.
- Another useful way of helping with mental health would be to campaign for more university /pharmacy department funding to go into paying counsellors, therapists or offering wellbeing training to pharmacy school staff. And to then update us students via the BPSA social media platforms or via email on the changes that the BPSA have successfully achieved because as students unless we are told of the changes or developments, we will never know about the successes and hard work of the BPSA.
- More support needs to be given to black students. Especially now we are struggling more than ever.
- During the exam period it is hard to focus on anything other than revision, which can lead to neglecting wellbeing. It seems that you must prioritise one over the other at times which can lead to stress and anxiety or not reaching full academic potential and feeling guilty that you prioritised self-care. I think, as with everything, balance is key, but it is hard to achieve balance in more demanding courses especially where you are at university 4/5 days a week and working



- University and workload do not impact my mental health/wellbeing. The things that do are unrelated, clarity on which services are purely for 'work troubles/issues' and which are for general support would be very helpful. Even more so if this branches out into specific areas/topics of support.
- How do I mention I have anxiety when working in a pharmacy, it may not be diagnosed because I am too anxious to even speak to a GP. My depression has gotten worse as oriel has opened and I feel hopeless and hate my pharmacy degree. I know I would love to be a pharmacist, but I just feel like my mental health is hindering my full potential. It is so hard to go a day of work, I have had to leave early and make up excuses, just so I can cry in my car. And no, a website on meditation will not help. I know I should speak to someone, but idk I physically cannot. And I am DREADING my final year. Let alone pre reg.
- I need to be supported in some way with the technology to continue my studies next year. I feel university need to provide all students with a laptop / iPad to ensure we can study from home. This is causing me a lot of stress as I cannot afford one but will not be able to study from home without one.
- Pharmacy has been a very hard degree and my mental health has been negatively affected by it. Particularly in 2nd and 3rd year where we had to memorise endless amounts of things and did not test how I am as a future pharmacist. This created huge anxiety and there were not enough hours in the day.
- The MPharm degree is difficult. I am capable, being in final year. The COVID-19 situation has taken me away from a learning environment which was tailored to my needs. I am from a background where higher education is not common option. This means that I have no support at home.
- A barrier I have found to accessing support is money. Most free services (like that at university and some charities) have huge waiting times and are then limited to 6 weeks maximum. However private services are expensive, especially for students/pre-reg pharmacists who may already be struggling financially.
 - The universities load on us is insane although they did try to help. Some of us experienced really tough situations as we are international students and had to travel to different countries before going home as our country's border was closed.
 - I have problems with my belongings in university than any of the pharmacy stress currently
 - The uncertainty and lack of knowing what is coming really is not helpful. Even knowing when we will know more or regular updates even if nothing major to



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update us on would be helpful. The student volunteering portal actually working with Gmail addresses would also inspire more confidence and feeling people actually care about how we can help.

- Not happy with the support from university staff. Emailed 3 teachers and no one replied to my concerns. Feel very let down and embarrassed.