

Pharmacists could provide vital support for young people to manage long-term conditions like juvenile arthritis

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Credit: University of Manchester

Manchester researchers and Pharmacy Research UK (PRUK) have published research exhibiting the valued role pharmacists can play in supporting young people with juvenile arthritis to self-manage their condition.

Researchers, including The University of Manchester's Dr Janet, explored the role of pharmacy for [young people](#) with long term conditions (LTCs) through the exemplar of juvenile arthritis. It builds on an earlier PRUK funded project (Arthriting) exploring young people and parents' experiences of using medication to treat [juvenile arthritis](#) by

bringing together pharmacists and rheumatology staff to explore how pharmacy might develop and promote a vision for the care of young people with long term conditions.

Although 59 per cent of young people with LTCs take medication, there is limited evidence around young people's experiences and use of pharmacy services. The study demonstrated the potential for pharmacists to support young people in better self-managing their condition. Establishing positive relationships is at the heart of the results – pharmacists building trust and rapport with young people, better communication between hospital and [community pharmacists](#), and meaningful integration of pharmacists into multidisciplinary clinical teams.

Rheumatology lead, Dr Janet MacDonagh who also works at the NIHR Manchester Musculoskeletal BRU, said: "The previous Arthriting project showed us that young people with arthritis were largely unaware of the [pharmacist](#)'s skills and relevance to their medicine-related needs. Parents generally go in to collect prescriptions alone, and opportunities to build relationships with a very accessible healthcare professional are missed."

The project lead, pharmacist Dr Nicola Gray, said that: "We know that young people find it difficult to access [health services](#) and that young people with arthritis are largely unaware of the pharmacist's skills and relevance to their medicine-related needs. This new project shows that pharmacists have the potential to help young people to build general healthcare skills, and to respond to their queries and concerns about their medication."

Miss Lamis Mullgrave, one of the original Arthriters (youth participant) and advisor to the project, said: "From my own experiences and from speaking to other young people, it is clear there is not enough

information out there to promote the role of pharmacists, or awareness of the pharmacy services currently available.

"It is important for young people and their families to have easy, accessible support with regards to medicines, and help with managing them, so to highlight this issue I believe is important as a means of improving healthcare for young people, [and] to encourage building relationships with pharmacists to support them in managing not only their medicines, but their health. I feel the findings from this project are of great value, and we should seek to implement these recommendations to improve health services for not only young people, but for service users of all ages."

Provided by University of Manchester

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