

# How do we avoid the 'ever decreasing circles syndrome' in service improvement?

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## Introduction

Pharmacy provides a core service within the NHS in the UK and has experienced cost-cutting legislation and efficiency initiatives e.g. Carter Review 2016. To remain productive/sustainable pharmacy needs to avoid the fate of 'Ever Decreasing Circles' where improvement seems unachievable.

## Study Purpose

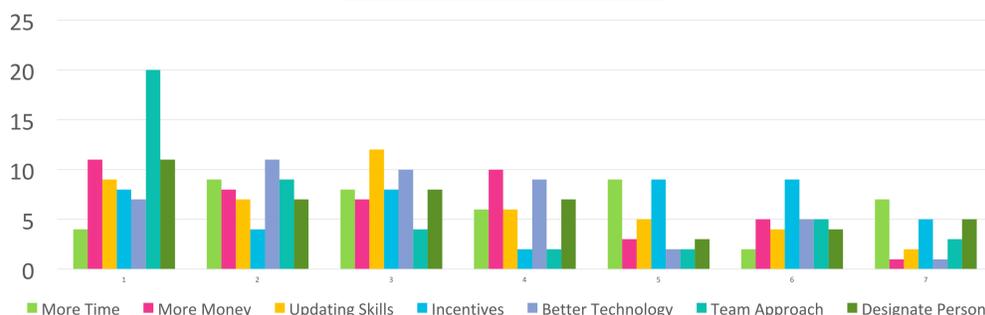
To critically analyse success factors (SF) and SI obstacles (O) linked to SI activity in UK pharmacies

## Method

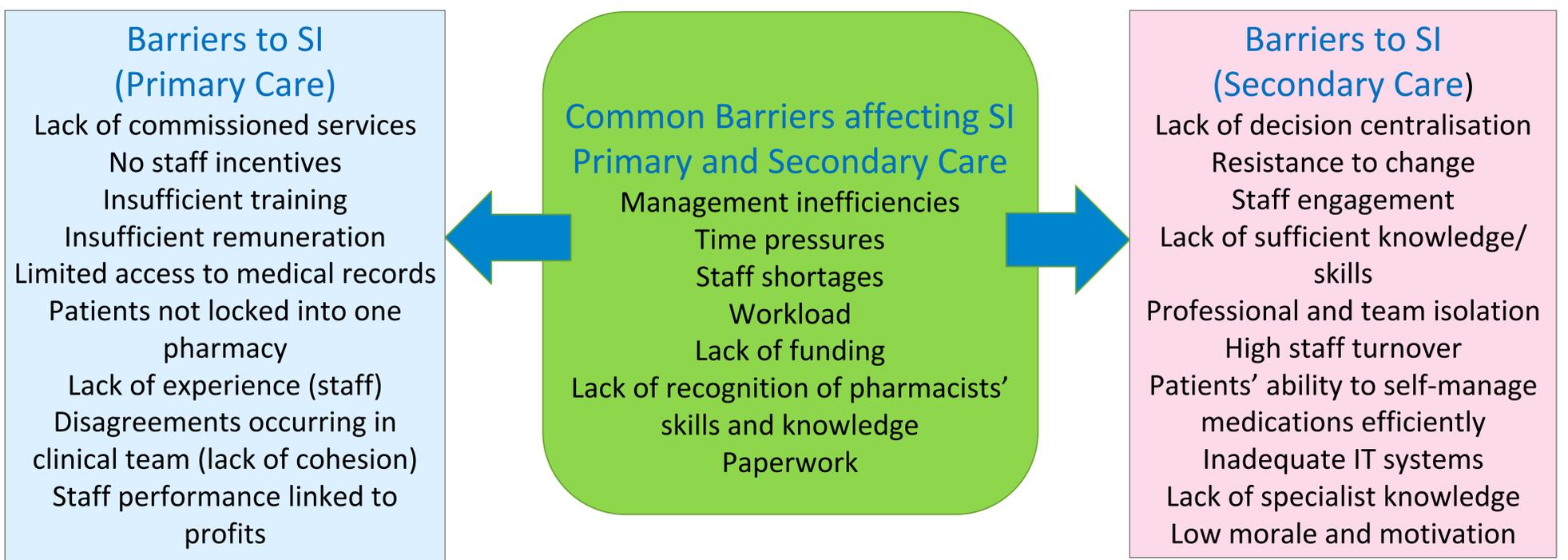
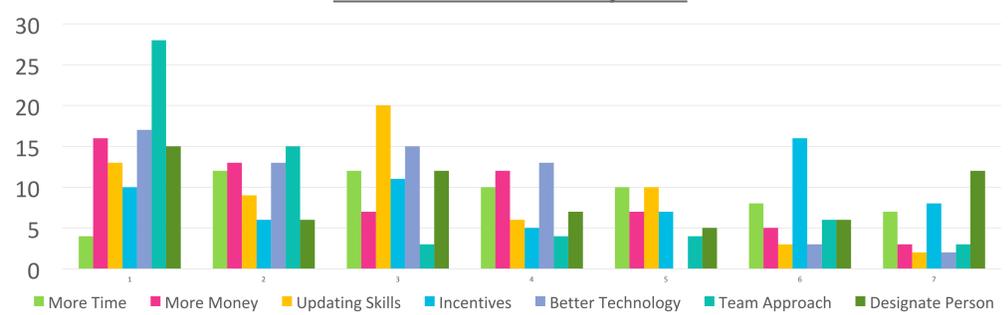
A piloted qualitative e-questionnaire was deployed via a multi-channel approach in November 2016. This was purposely targeted at pharmacy staff investigating reasons for undertaking and benefits of service improvement initiatives, and the SISFs and SIOs influencing its successful implementation. Data were analysed using thematic analysis.

## Results

CSF of SI in Primary Care



CSF of SI in Secondary Care



## Discussion

- The study indicated that successful delivery of the SI agenda may be accomplished through the expansion of pharmacists' skills, promotion of team working, and improvement in the management of SI to deliver services consistently across different pharmacies.
- Solutions to overcoming barriers were suggested such as: increasing funding; investing in services, IT systems and number of staff; providing additional/specialist training and increasing the skill-mix; improving communication across the teams and collaborative working; offering more incentives and career progression for staff retention; and educating patients about their medicines and self-management.
- Participants reported valuing a team work approach to SI with the view to nurture positive change, helping pharmacy become fit for purpose in 2017/18 and beyond.

## Conclusion

This study shows areas of concern with current SI initiatives and proposes key areas to target action, improve dissonance and disengagement and help avoid the scenario of 'ever decreasing circle' of SI activity and limited returns.