

Rural Necessities Lead to Pharmacist Creativity:

The Birth of a Customisable Medicines List for Medical & Nursing Staff to Provide to Post-Natal Patients

Sidony Miller-Waugh¹, Jorgia Price¹, Louise Quabba¹, Izabella Ramirez De Arellano²

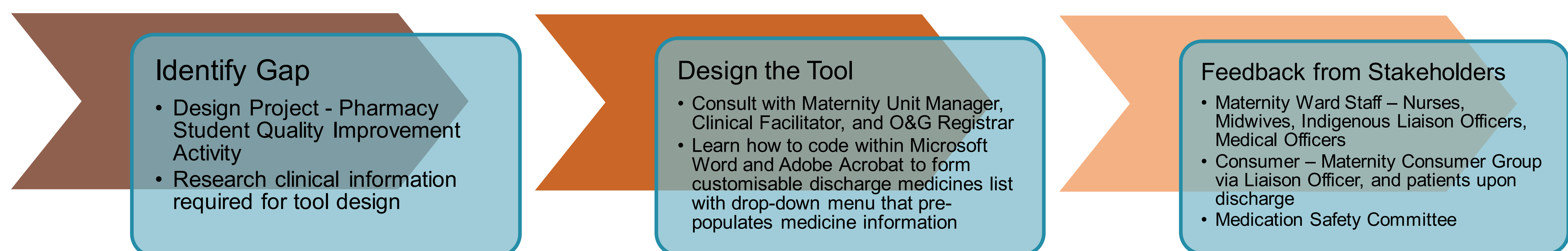
1. Mount Isa Hospital Pharmacy Department, Mount Isa, Queensland 2. James Cook University, Townsville, Queensland

Background

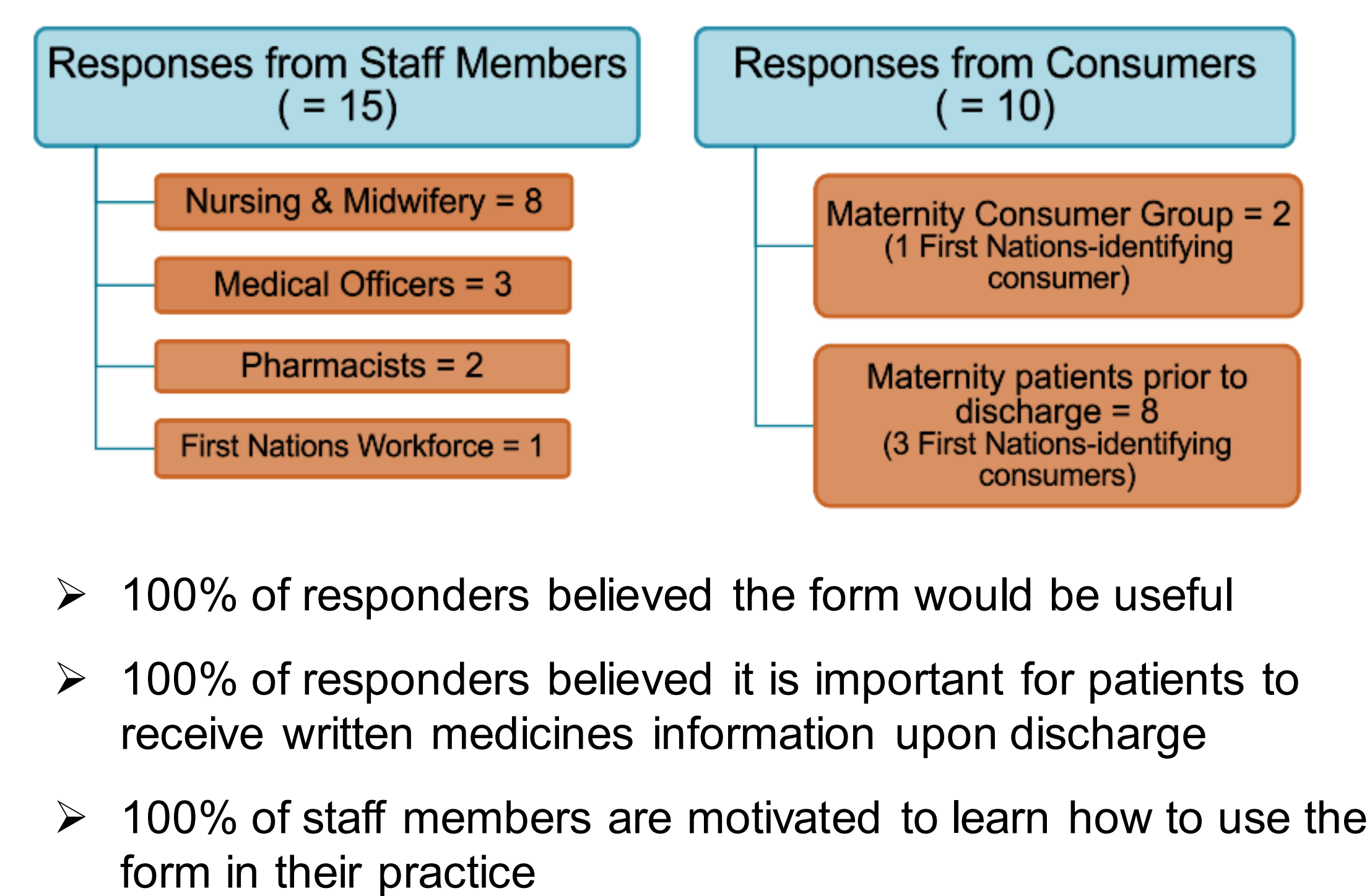
In rural hospitals where clinical pharmacy services are scarce, patients are often discharged without a pharmacist reconciling their medicines and providing a printed Discharge Medicines Record. In the absence of pharmacist availability, the medical, nursing and midwifery staff are responsible for providing their patients with discharge medicines information. While our pharmacy department may not always be able to provide a clinical pharmacy service to the Maternity Unit, we can provide education and frameworks to encourage safe discharge medication practices being upheld in all circumstances. This formed the idea for a Discharge Medicines List Template to empower non-pharmacist staff to safely provide medicines information to post-natal patients prior to discharge.

Methods

After discussing the project with key stakeholders in the Maternity Unit team, we designed the tool using Microsoft Word and Adobe Acrobat. Each medication is listed in a table with the following information: generic name, brand name/s, indication, dose, frequency, safety in breastfeeding, and space for additional safety information. The medicines we programmed into the PDF fillable form are available on a drop-down selection menu so that when a medicine is selected, the fields are automatically pre-populated with medicines information as agreed upon by the consultation group. Once the tool was formed, we designed and disseminated a survey tool to collect feedback from other staff members and consumers.



Results



Staff Member Quotes:

"I think our staff would be excited to learn how to provide these to our patients."

"Will be very beneficial for our mothers and their partners/families too."

"I have previously provided handwritten information to outline when to take blood pressure medication and simple analgesia – this would be helpful instead."

"I have checked in on mothers after birth and they were not taking their medicines correctly, even paracetamol or ibuprofen. I think having this would have helped make sure they understand properly before they go home."

Consumer Quotes:

"It would have been really helpful with my previous births"

"Really good idea so I can have something to read at home when I am tired and forgetful."

"Definitely helpful especially as you may be sleep deprived and not taking much in after having a baby, so great to have it written down."

"I really like it, would be helpful to not need to Google if medicines are safe in breastfeeding."

What are the valuable learnings?

This project is a successful example of an innovative pharmacist-led solution borne of a recognised medication safety gap during a staff workforce crisis. Building capacity in our nursing and medical staff to develop their medication safety skills is a sustainable step towards ensuring patient safety when clinical pharmacy coverage is not available. In addition to this, learning how to code for the form design is a valuable skill that could be transferred to other novel, electronic projects in the future. The multidisciplinary collaboration was a rewarding rapport-building opportunity between the Pharmacy Department and the Maternity Unit that may lead to other positive medication safety improvements for maternity patients in the future.

Acknowledgements

- Mount Isa Hospital Maternity Unit, with particular thanks to Julie Hurst, Susara Saliba and Dr Keegan Coomer for their expertise and guidance.
- Jasmine Barber for access to the Maternity Consumer Group, and all the consumers who were enthusiastic to provide feedback on the tool.
- Nathan Stevens for providing IT support.

Contact us

Sidony Miller-Waugh, Senior Outreach Pharmacist sidony.miller-waugh@health.qld.gov.au
 Jorgia Price, Senior Clinical Pharmacist jorgia.martin@health.qld.gov.au
 Louise Quabba, A/Director of Pharmacy louise.brennan@health.qld.gov.au

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