Addressing the Polypharmacy **Challenge in Older People with** Multimorbidity (APOLLO-MM)

> Polypharmacy (the use of multiple medicines by one patient) is on the rise and is a global safety issue. Older age and larger numbers of medications to escalating risk. We define polypharmacy as a 'wicked problem' and this project is an in-depth exploration of polypharmacy as it plays

What did we do?

We studied the experiences and practices of polypharmacy across patients' homes, general practices and community pharmacy with a focus on people age 65+ and prescribed 10+ medications. We followed 24 patients for up to 2 years and conducted observations in 3 GP practices and 4 community pharmacies. We used a wide range of approaches observations in the field, narrative interviews, cultural probes, co-design - to understand why medicines practices are often hidden from view.

How is it helping?

We have identified new concepts to understand this problem and potential solutions. We have produced a suite of freely available e-learning materials through the Royal College of General Practitioners which encourage professionals to 'think differently' about polypharmacy. We have also worked with patients using a co-design process which – alongside our findings from the wider study – provided inspiration for a series of seven fictional storybooks and an accompanying website with audiobooks called 'Let's Talk Differently about Medicines' (medicinestalk.co.uk). These stories are designed to change the nature of discussion between clinicians and patients about their medicines and care, to give patients greater control and understanding over their medications.

Representative: Professor Deborah Swinglehurst

Dr Nina Fudge was the post-doctoral research associate on this study and led fieldwork. Lucie Hogger, Alison Thomson, Sarah Pocknell, Celia Roberts, Sarah Collins also collaborated on different parts of the project and patients who participated in this study. We also also thank members of their Expert Advisory Group and patient panel. Additional funding from National Institute for Health Research (NIRH) through a Clinicitian Scientist Award CS-2015-15-004 (DS).







Applied Research Collaboration

orth Thames