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Reaching consensus on mechanisms of change to support implementation of medication reviews in community pharmacies

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Background Since 2022 patients with 5 or more medicines can receive a medication review (MR) in a community pharmacy remunerated by the German health system. However, implementation is slow, and few pharmacies are currently providing MRs. Stakeholders' input is necessary to generate and prioritise mechanisms of change through which a successful implementation strategy will achieve implementation outcomes.

Objectives

- To generate mechanisms of change [1] for external facilitation (EXT FAC) and incentives (INC)
- To reach consensus on the most encouraging mechanisms

Methods Setting: German community pharmacy system; Participants: separate groups with employees of regulatory pharmacy chambers (C), and pharmacy owners (O); Online Nominal Group Technique (NGT): participants generated mechanisms of change, then voted independently. Quantitative analysis: calculation of relative importance [2]; ranking mechanisms according to their relative importance Qualitative analysis: Basic content analysis of transcribed NGT discussion; mapping of the five highest ranked mechanisms per group and strategy against implementation outcomes using the transcripts.

Results Four online NGT discussions were held in early 2023. Table 1 lists the number of mechanisms generated. The five highest ranked categories per group and strategy are displayed in Figure 1 and were mapped against implementation outcomes. (Figure 2) Two mechanisms were not linked to any outcome by participants. Quotes illustrate the context of generated mechanisms of change. (Figure 3) Five categories, namely software, process support, expert support line, financial viability and materials were named either by both participant groups or served both as EXT FAC and INC according to participants.

Group	Strategy	No of mechanisms generated in initial brainstorming	No of mechanisms that received votes in the ranking step	No of categories derived from combining similar mechanisms
C1	EXT FAC	22	12	15
C2	EXT FAC	16	10	
O1	EXT FAC	18	12	
O2	EXT FAC	13	8	13
C1	INC	7	7	11
C2	INC	16	11	
O1	INC	7	6	10
O2	INC	12	10	

Table 1: Number of mechanisms generated per group (C= chamber employees, O= owners) and strategy (EXT FAC= external facilitation), INC (incentives)

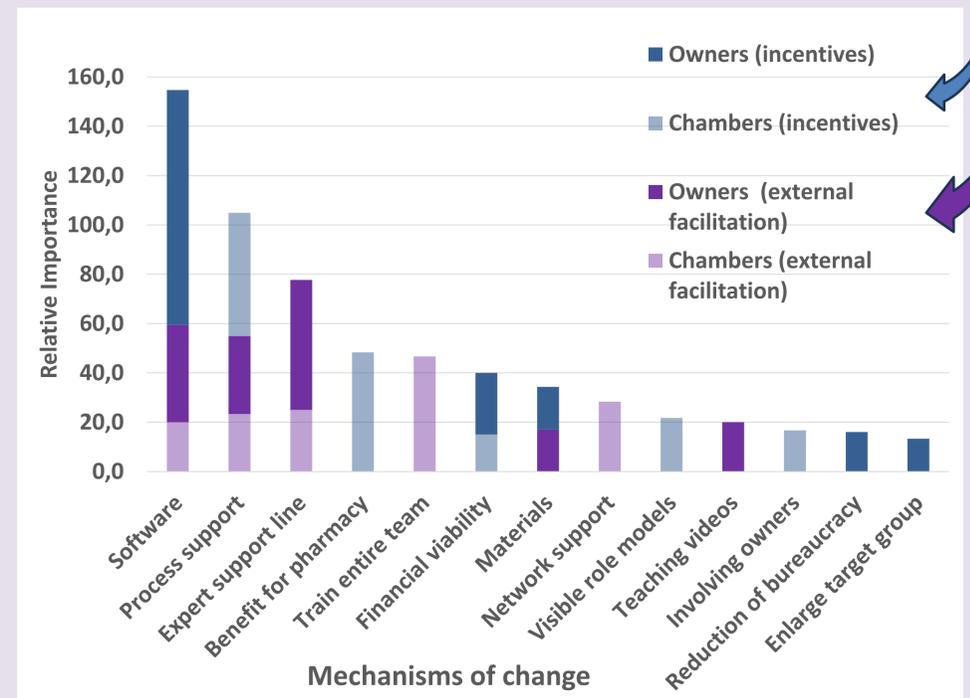


Figure 1: Relative importance of the five highest ranked categories of mechanisms

„For me [software] would be the biggest incentive. A very simple tool that can be used intuitively.“
Software (O23)

„We were not quite sure if we had got [the MR] right. The opportunity to send it to a tutor who double checks, gives feedback and then confirms or adds another point.“
Expert support line (O12)

„To feature someone who performs MRs as a role model. ... who says I love my job ... so that others can see that it works.“
Benefit for pharmacies (C23)

„I believe it is very important to include technicians because they are always at the counter and have the most contact with patients.“
Train entire team (C22)

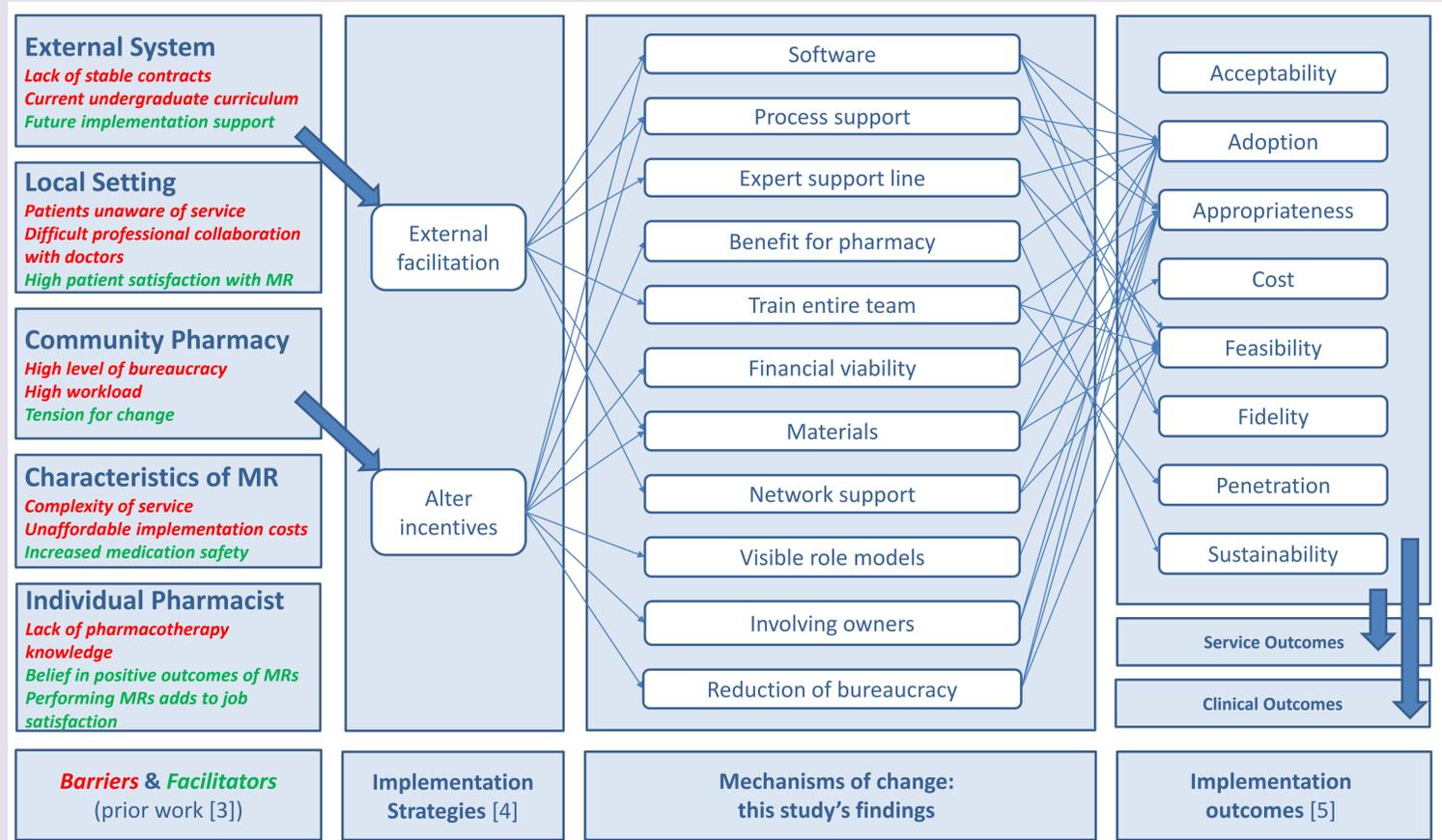


Figure 2: A model for implementing medication reviews in community pharmacy

Figure 3: Quotes to illustrate the context of suggested mechanisms

Conclusion Software, process support and expert support line reached high consensus among both groups and targeted three or more implementation outcomes. While owners suggested practical mechanisms for external facilitation which would also incentivise them to get started, chamber employees favoured rather intangible incentives such as future benefits for pharmacy. Both viewpoints yielded important mechanisms that target early implementation outcomes and can thus inform an implementation plan.

References [1] Mechanisms of change: The action on the ground through which a strategy impacts on implementation outcomes; Smith, Implement Sci 2020 [2] McMillan, Health Serv Outc Res Meth 2014; [3] Michel, IJCP 2023; [4] Expert recommendations for Implementing Change (ERIC), Powell, Implement Sci 2015; [5] Proctor, Adm Policy Ment Hlth 2011