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An exploration of community pharmacists' views on the need for, type and content of a tool to support engagement with patients who may be homeless

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Background

Homelessness remains a global public health concern.^[1] A prior survey indicated the need for pharmacist training and coverage of the topic of homelessness around minimising impact of medicines use, referring for social support, confidence in broaching the subject with patients, support and guidelines for practice.

Aim

To explore community pharmacists' views on the need for, type and content of a tool to support their engagement with patients who may be homeless.

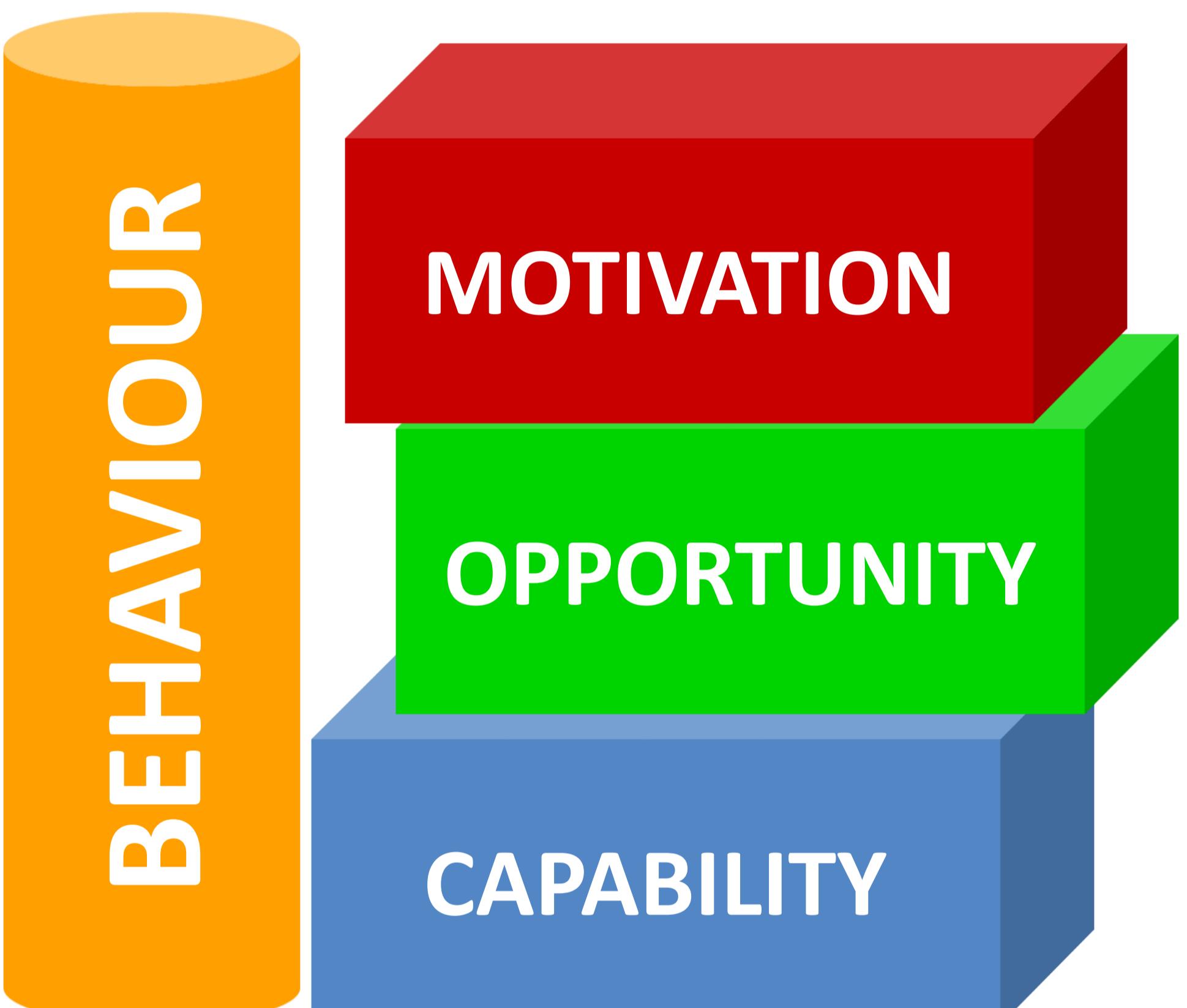
Methods

A semi-structured interview schedule was developed based on existing literature, survey results^[2] and a theoretical framework, the COM-B model, which explores capability, opportunity and motivation for a behaviour. Community pharmacists from England and Scotland who had taken part in a survey consented to take part in a follow-on, digitally recorded telephone interview. Each was transcribed then coded using a framework approach. Ethical approval had been gained.

Results

Capability

Interviews (n=12) conducted November-December 2017 found all participants felt capable of improving their approach when engaging with patients who may be experiencing homelessness. All felt a support tool should be developed.



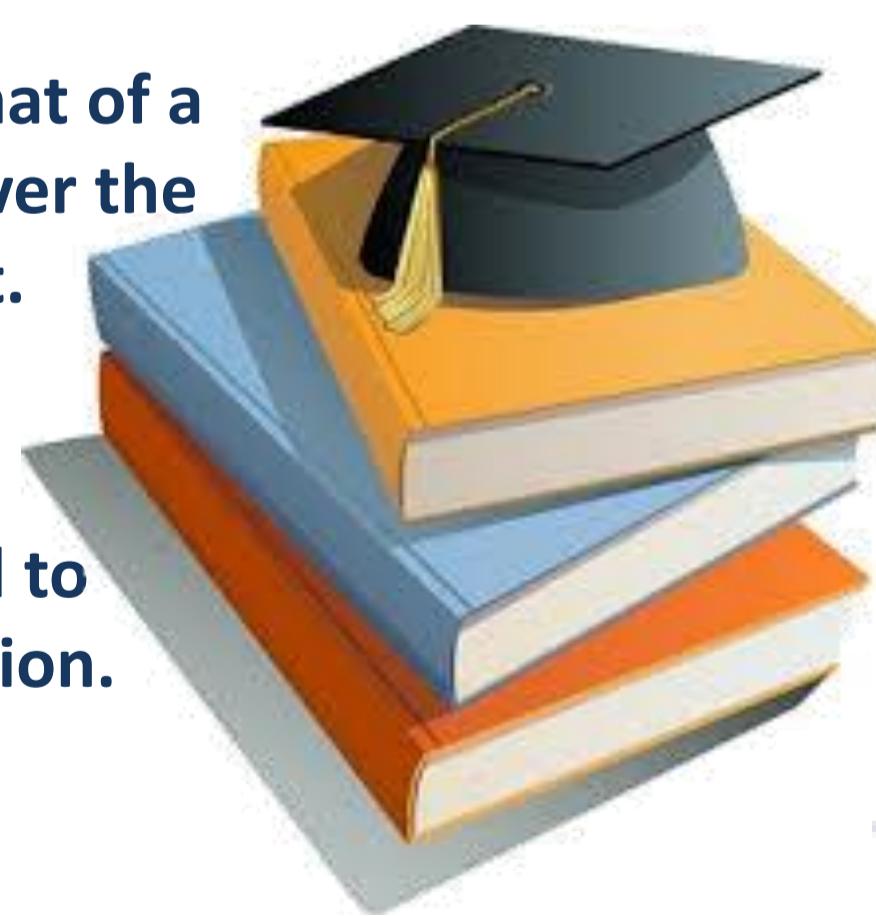
Opportunity

They welcomed the opportunity to contribute to the content and format of a support tool. They also thought there were opportunities to better cover the topic at undergraduate level and continuing professional development.



Motivation

Some suggested role play to improve confidence and all felt motivated to signpost to support services if provided with up-to-date local information.



Discussion & Conclusion

This small sample of community pharmacists perceive that they are capable, motivated and have the opportunity to better engage with patients considered to be homeless. However, this was a small cohort and further research is indicated to inform support tool design.



Acknowledgements

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References

- [1] Scottish Public Health Observatory (2017) Homelessness. Available from: <http://www.scotpho.org.uk/life-circumstances/homelessness/key-points>
[2] Paudyal V, MacLure K, Buchanan C, Wilson L, McLeod J, Stewart D. (2017) When you are homeless, you are not thinking about your medication, but your food, shelter or heat for the night': behavioural determinants of the homeless population adherence to prescribed medicines. *Public Health* (epub ahead of print). Doi: 10.1016/j.puhe.2017.03.002

