

PCNE Vision 2025: where to go from now?

The focus of the PCNE network is to support and connect researchers involved in the development, evaluation and implementation of pharmaceutical care. This is done by supporting research as such (mainly through collaboration, and exchange of ideas and experiences) and by training and mentoring of researchers.



Network for researchers

PCNE is a network for researchers, both senior researchers and those to come. This could be master students, PhD candidates, but also practitioners or consultants at professional organisations aiming to set up research projects.

Supporting research

The focus of PCNE is to support and enhance research in pharmaceutical care in order to help to develop pharmacy practice so that it improves patient outcomes and contributes to quality of life. This research could be related to the use of medicines in society, effects and adverse effects of medicines, patient behaviour in dealing with medicines, interventions to optimize medicines' use, understanding providers' attitudes, barriers and facilitators for collaboration in health care.

Supporting research means creating opportunities by **sharing** expertise about study designs, research methods and results, and by sharing ideas for future research projects. It also means **developing** research tools and guidelines, as well as developing ideas, protocols and grant applications for joint projects that are publishable.

The three main areas of research on pharmaceutical care are:

- the development of **new interventions and services** (e.g. proof of concept studies, feasibility studies.),
- the **implementation process** of (new) interventions and services, including research on current practice.
- **outcomes** of interventions and services, including the development of outcome measures (on the level of the patient, provider, society),

Training and mentoring

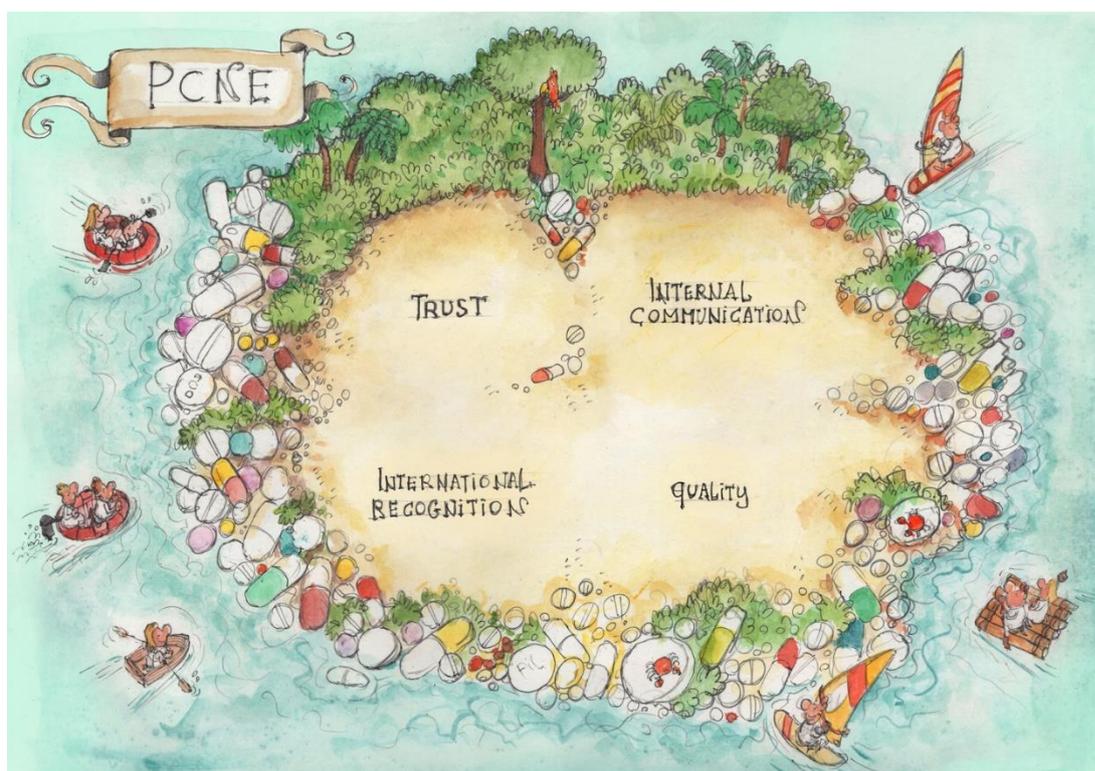
PCNE as a network offers opportunities for training and mentoring of researchers active in the field of pharmaceutical care. The aim of the training and mentoring is to raise critical researchers, improve research skills, including skills needed for successful grant applications, promote quality in pharmaceutical care research, and disseminate new research methods.

The three main areas considered in (formal) training are:

- research methods (e.g. statistical methods; development of a core outcome set; ...),
- how to develop research tools and guidelines,
- how to teach research methods to others (e.g. students, PhD students, health care professionals,...).

In addition to the more formal training, there is also a lot of informal training, e.g. by developing joined research proposals, sharing the successes and experiences from on-going or completed research projects and exchanging ideas for new projects.

PCNE as a network strives for international recognition through quality in pharmaceutical care research. The network is dynamic, open and flexible, based on trust between the members and communicates actively - both within the network and with all interested parties.



International recognition

International recognition does not originate from the organisation as such, but from contributions by individual researchers and research institutions that are part of it, and from the quality of the research and the projects that are carried out within the network. International recognition is achieved when the right researchers feel PCNE is the place to go and meet to share knowledge about pharmaceutical care research.

International recognition could come through:

- opinion papers, written under the umbrella of PCNE, on “hot” topics in pharmaceutical care,
- papers in high-impact journals on research projects with sound methodology and strong results that were performed by researchers collaborating within the PCNE network,
- successful grant applications, e.g. on the European level,
- high quality of the working symposia and conferences, including contributions from high-level speakers,
- widely used research tools and guidelines as developed by PCNE partnerships,
- efficient implementation of innovative ideas, that were developed by researchers collaborating within the PCNE network, in pharmacy practice in different countries,
- uptake of the results of PCNE projects in national (clinical) guidelines.

Dynamic, open and flexible network

PCNE is an open and flexible platform allowing researchers to network and form partnerships. The organisation is run by a board, elected among the members, who serve the network on a voluntary basis. The board takes the lead in the development of the network, and the fulfilment of the vision. The backbone of the network is the vision; its ultimate strength are the activities and the people participating in the network. The network therefore counts on the responsibility of all involved to make it active and relevant. It has been a tradition to have a professional (paid) secretary, securing continuity of the network. For now (board 2018-2020), it is the aim to retain this tradition. In the future it is for the (new) board, in consultation with the GA, to decide whether a professional secretary will still be hired, and if yes, to what extent.¹ The goal is to be transparent in the organisation and the leadership of the network.

Strong communication

Communication is an essential element to make the network attractive and vibrant. We are living in an open society where knowledge and ideas are shared all the time. In this regard PCNE should be visible and influencing the debate on the development of pharmacy practice and the role pharmaceutical care research.

Communication is done by:

- social media: linked-in, Facebook, Twitter,... : open for all, communicating knowledge about pharmaceutical care research, prompting people, interacting with one another, allowing to search for expertise...,
- website: to disseminate general information on the network and its activities, including information on working groups, materials from previous working conferences,...,
- publications in peer reviewed international journals, including opinion papers,
- publications in national pharmacy journals.

¹ One of the questions is whether the money should be used for a professional secretary, or for activities that would benefit the members directly (such as high-profile speakers, money to facilitate working groups,...) or for both, and how the organisation could be more efficient in making profit.

PCNE is all about its activities. The network offers opportunities for researchers to develop their skills and share knowledge in different ways, adapted to the needs of the people involved. Strongholds of PCNE are its bi-annual working conferences, symposia and working groups. New activities to develop are webinars and a system of mentoring.

Bi-annual working conferences

The aim of the bi-annual conferences is to offer researchers the opportunity to *share* expertise about methodology (study designs, research methods), to *share* results from on-going research, to *share* experience from implementation and sustainability of the implementation of innovation, and to *share* ideas for future research projects in pharmaceutical care. It also offers the time and place to develop concrete products such as research tools and guidelines, and protocols for joint projects. The backbone of the conferences consists of comprehensive workshops². In addition, plenary lectures as well as oral communications and poster discussions are also organised.

The workshops at the conferences are always targeted at researchers in pharmaceutical care. Some distinction might be made between workshops for senior researchers, and others for researchers new in the field, as to make the working conferences relevant for all people aligned to the network and all others interested, and thereby answering their needs. At least one workshop is dedicated to research methods, allowing participants to get familiar with new methodologies or strategies that are used (or could be used) in pharmaceutical care research³. A clear and timely description of the aims of the workshop, the targeted audience, the format and the results to be achieved, is essential to make the workshops successful.

Working groups

Within the PCNE framework there are some established working groups (e.g. on medication review; drug-related problems). Upcoming topics may require starting up new or 'ad hoc' groups. The aim of the working groups is to advance and expand the activities between working conferences, and build materials/tools that could enhance pharmaceutical care research.

The initiative on starting (or continuing) a working group should be on the members⁴. Working groups have a flexible structure and composition; people can join and leave, and the group can start and stop. However, once established there is a need for some leadership and structure and full transparency in work and meetings is essential.

Joint projects

PCNE stimulates its members to collaborate and write joint research proposals, to apply for funding for this type of research, and to actively set up international research projects. The idea for joint research proposals may emanate from working conferences, symposia, or come from a working group, but should not be limited to these occasions. For a project to be called a PCNE project, it is important that all members get the opportunity to participate, that in all communication about the project PCNE is mentioned, and that the progress and results of the project are disseminated within PCNE. For a project to be successful, clear arrangements about leadership, management and publication policy should be made, right from the beginning.

² The aims and format of PCNE workshops are described in a guideline that has to be used by the scientific board of PCNE working conferences and by workshop facilitators

³ This might call for another workshop format for seniors, e.g. debating hot topics, planning a strategy for your research group,... This could also result in joint applications for European funding.

⁴ This goes back to the original idea of the working groups, starting from discussions and real needs in the field.

Bi-annual symposia

The bi-annual symposia should be mainly seen as a place to work and meet for the working groups, and to report on the progress that has been made (e.g. next version of a classification; development of a definition,...). However, all interested are welcome and can contribute to the work to be done. The symposia further host a few plenary and poster sessions, in order to stick with the general idea of sharing knowledge and expertise.

Mentoring

A system of mentoring has been requested by many colleagues, not only by those who are new in the field, but also by others getting new responsibilities. Mentoring could start at working conferences, where junior and senior researchers meet, but should not be limited to that. Junior researchers could apply for an (international) mentor, who guides them in research challenges that go beyond the expertise of their own research units and in strategic (career) decisions to be taken. In this way, the role of a mentor is clearly different from that of a supervisor. Mentoring could open opportunities for networking, research stays, and could actually make people grow. Senior researchers have a moral obligation to make the research and development of pharmaceutical care on-going, through new and well-trained colleagues, and should hence be willing to become a mentor.

PCNE facilitates the mentoring program, through transparency on members' skills and competencies, and opening a platform to liaise mentors and mentees. PCNE also offers a format defining roles and responsibilities to structure the mentorship.

Webinars

Webinars could be a way of making the network more active between the meetings, and to disseminate knowledge to a wider audience. Webinars could be on research methods (including basic skills such as writing an abstract or the application of certain methods and techniques) but could also be an occasion to be at the front row when results of research projects are presented, e.g. at national conferences or meetings. The idea is not so much about developing new material to be presented through webinars, but about using this technology to share courses and presentations that are anyway organized, and reach a wider audience. PCNE offers the platform to announce webinars, and actively promotes this idea. The PCNE board takes the lead to make sure 1-2 webinars are organized every year, but counts on all involved to open up seminars and presentations to the PCNE network through this technology. Where possible, certificates of attendance should be developed, as to support participants to get accreditation for their active participation.

Student exchange

Facilitating student exchange within the network could be a way to work on joint projects, advance the working groups and share expertise. Ideally, this should be done within the Erasmus program, but other opportunities should be explored as well.