

Professor Deborah Swinglehurst is supported by CLAHRC North Thames to investigate polypharmacy – a patient taking two or more medications – which can often mean drugs are prescribed that are not or no longer needed.



Professor Swinglehurst's research investigates how professionals and patients organise polypharmacy, in particular, the use of multi-compartment compliance aids (MCAs or 'dosette boxes'), and the contested evidence around their effectiveness or appropriateness for many patients.



Professor Swinglehurst, a practising GP, had her work recognised at the recent Society for Primary Care's (SAPC) Annual Scientific Meeting in Exeter. Professor Swinglehurst, working out of Queen Mary University London, was awarded the Senior Prize for presenting her work

at the meeting, which awards her a distinguished presentation slot at the NAPCRG (North America Primary Care Research Group) conference in Toronto this November.

Read Professor Swinglehurst's abstract, entitled [Organising polypharmacy: unpacking medicines, unpacking meanings](#)

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Organising polypharmacy: unpacking medicines, unpacking meanings

Conference: [SAPC ASM 2019 - Exeter](#)

Talk Code: 3B.1

Presenter: Deborah A Swinglehurst

Co-authors: Nina Fudge

Author institutions: Queen Mary University of London

Problem

Approximately 64 million multi-compartment compliance aids (MCAs or 'dosette boxes') are issued by community pharmacies in England every year. Professional guidance directed at pharmacists strongly discourages their use in all but extreme circumstances, citing concerns such as: lack of evidence to support them; increased risk of dispensing errors; reduced medicine stability once medicines are removed from original packaging. Despite efforts from professional bodies to discourage use of MCAs, demand for MCAs is increasing. We investigate how professionals and patients organise polypharmacy and consider the remarkable persistence of the MCA as one way of organising polypharmacy in the context of high risk polypharmacy. We unpack the meanings attributed to different ways of organising medicines across a range of contexts: patients' homes, GP surgeries and community pharmacy.