Study background:
Healthy Living Champion's (HLCs) contribution has been recognised as a key facilitator in the enhanced uptake and delivery of community pharmacy services through the Healthy Living Pharmacy (HLP) project. HLCs have cited their networking opportunities as the source of their motivation and professional development.

Aim:
To explore the influence attending HLC meetings has on the HLC role.

Methods:
Focus groups were employed to interview the HLCs employed in the city's community pharmacies. The interview schedule was created iteratively based on the literature relating to communities of practice (CoP).

Results:
Twenty of the 33 HLCs participated in two focus groups. An inductive approach to the qualitative analysis identified the three characteristics described to comprise a CoP (Lave and Wenger 1991)(Figure 1). Furthermore, the HLCs described the collaborative learning opportunities, sharing personal practice and regular interaction afforded by the HLCs meetings, enhanced their professional practice and improved their confidence in performing their role.

Conclusion:
CoPs have gained recognition in the business sector for improving organisational performance through the sharing of tacit knowledge, sparking innovation, reducing the learning curve for new staff and as a means of creating social capital. This study demonstrates the potential for CoP to contribute similar benefits for members of the pharmacy profession.

References: