

## **Assessing and raising public awareness about the approval of medicines in Wales.**

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### **Background**

The All Wales Medicines Strategy Group (AWMSG) is a national advisory committee that aims to improve the use of medication in Wales, having a role in both appraising new medicines and producing prescribing guidance. An animated video was developed in association with the AWMSG's patient and public interest group to raise awareness of the AWMSG's work and to encourage members of the public to become involved with it. This project aimed to use the HWW platform to evaluate the video as a public engagement tool.

### **Methods**

HealthWise Wales (HWW) is a population-based online study with over 35,000 participants from the Welsh public, who volunteer to answer questions on lifestyle and health-related topics. To assess public awareness of the AWMSG, HWW participants were asked to log in and complete a baseline questionnaire, watch the AWMSG's short animated film, and then repeat the questionnaire to determine the video's impact on improving public awareness of, or interest in, the work of the AWMSG. This was a proof of concept study for the test-intervention-retest methodology on the HWW platform.

### **Findings**

1,288 participants completed the study. At baseline, 86% respondents thought that it is important to have an independent body to advise the government on which medicines are available in Wales, however, 77% didn't know how new medicines are approved in Wales. After watching the video 92% reported having a better understanding of how new drugs are approved and 72% said that they knew what the role of AWMSG was. Over half of the respondents (58%) said they would consider being involved in the assessment of new medicines in the future.

### **Conclusion**

This study demonstrates that awareness of the AWMSG and the role of the public in approving new medicines for use in Wales among a health-conscious population is low (23%). This project suggests that sharing this video with the wider public will increase awareness of the medicines approval process in Wales and the opportunity for patient and public involvement in it. The test-intervention-retest methodology was effective and well received by HWW participants demonstrating that HealthWise Wales is a useful platform for testing interventions to encourage public involvement with health issues.