On Tuesday afternoon (23rd June 2015) LIIPS held a very successful and well-attended Medication Safety event. Bringing together clinicians and academics, from five local healthcare and academic organisations, the session encouraged the sharing of expertise and ideas, and lead to a great deal of productive discussion to inform future work.

The event, facilitated by Suzanne Khalid (University Hospitals Leicester) and Diane Ketley (University of Leicester), both members of the LIIPS Core Development Group, focused on attempts to reduce errors and incidents around prescribing, dispensing, preparing, and administering medicines. The aim of LIIPS is to facilitate collaboration between academics and frontline professionals on patient safety issues through events such as this, which bring together people who are involved in similar projects or fields but might otherwise not have had much opportunity to interact or work together. As Suzanne Khalid put it, when discussing the future of the medication safety group, “what we want to do is grow the community.”

Three presentations were given. Dr Rakesh Patel (NIHR Academic Clinical Lecturer in Medical Education/Honorary Specialist Registrar in Nephrology) talked about the ePIFFany (Prescribing Insight for the Future) project for which he was the Lead Investigator. ePIFFany, a LIIPS demonstrator project, used an education intervention to successfully improve the prescribing competence, performance, and safety behaviours of junior doctors on a renal ward. Rakesh invited advice and comments on how to sustain and expand the success of the project. The range of attendees at the meeting meant a lively discussion with a number of productive suggestions made for moving the project forward.

Next, we heard from Jenny Dolphin (Leicestershire Partnership Trust), who is working with Dr Ceri Jones (University Hospitals Leicester) and Dr William Green (University of Leicester) in one of the first successful partnerships resulting from the LIIPS ‘matchmaking’ activity. She informed the group about her work on medication errors and the analysis of reported errors and asked for some friendly critique of her plans to take the project forward. A number of suggestions were made, and the possibility of collaborating with UHL was raised along with the potential benefit of patient involvement in the project.
Finally Dr Thomas Jun (Loughborough University Design School) advertised the opportunity for collaborative projects on Human Factors and Ergonomics, with MSc/BSc student placements from University of Loughborough. It was noted that this might be a way to progress forward with valuable work that would require only minimal funding, and suggestions were made about how to make the projects seem attractive to students. (For details of this opportunity contact LIIPS) As Dr Rakesh Patel noted during the discussion following the presentation, “why wouldn’t we want to work on shared projects and help each other out? It’s a win-win: everybody benefits.” Such collaborative work would be precisely in the spirit of LIIPS.

Finally, before the end of the session, Diane Ketley asked the group to suggest how best to build on the event for future sessions, a request which generated a multitude of valuable propositions and definitely demonstrated a desire for the group to continue to meet. The potential benefits of such meetings seemed clear, and as Kate Dawson (Lead Pharmacist - Antimicrobials at University Hospitals Leicester) commented, “we shouldn’t underestimate the value personal contact.” Both during and following the event there was ample opportunity for attendants to connect, to discuss their mutual interests, and to raise the possibility of new collaborative projects in the future. It certainly seemed that people had found plenty to talk about! It was agreed that there was a very good atmosphere and a real passion for making positive changes to the systems already in place.