

ANALYSIS OF PHARMACY RESEARCH PROJECTS

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INTRODUCTION

Inclusion of pharmacy research projects within graduate pharmacy programmes contributes to student engagement and development of research skills.

AIMS

To classify research projects undertaken at the Department of Pharmacy of the University of Malta within the programme leading to a degree in pharmacy, analyse research focus areas, and develop an index to facilitate accessibility.

METHOD

Stage I

- Research projects submitted between 1977 and 2024 were reviewed
- Structured database was developed with metadata

Stage II

- Categorisation was done using the Medical Subject Headings (MeSH) system to organise projects hierarchically
- Index of research projects was developed

Stage III

Index was evaluated to identify trends and focus areas

RESULTS

- A total of 1,254 research projects were analysed.
- Research output increased from the 1970s (n=22), peaked in the 1990s (n=346), and stabilised in the 2000s (n=328) and 2010s (n=305). In the 2020s, 126 research projects are recorded to-date.
- The most prominent research focus areas were: Social and administrative pharmacy (n=271), pharmacotherapy (n=229) and pharmaceutical care (n=205) (Figure 1).
- The dominant MeSH primary categories were ‘Health Care’ (n=320) and ‘Diseases’ (n=283) (Figure 2).
- Within ‘Health Care’, ‘Health Care Facilities, Workforce, and Services’ (n=149), particularly community pharmacy services (n=53), and ‘Health Services Administration’ (n=104), notably point-of-care testing (n=19), were key research areas.
- Within ‘Diseases’, ‘Cardiovascular’ (n=38), particularly hypertension (n=17), and ‘Endocrine System’ especially diabetes mellitus (n=24), were most prevalent.

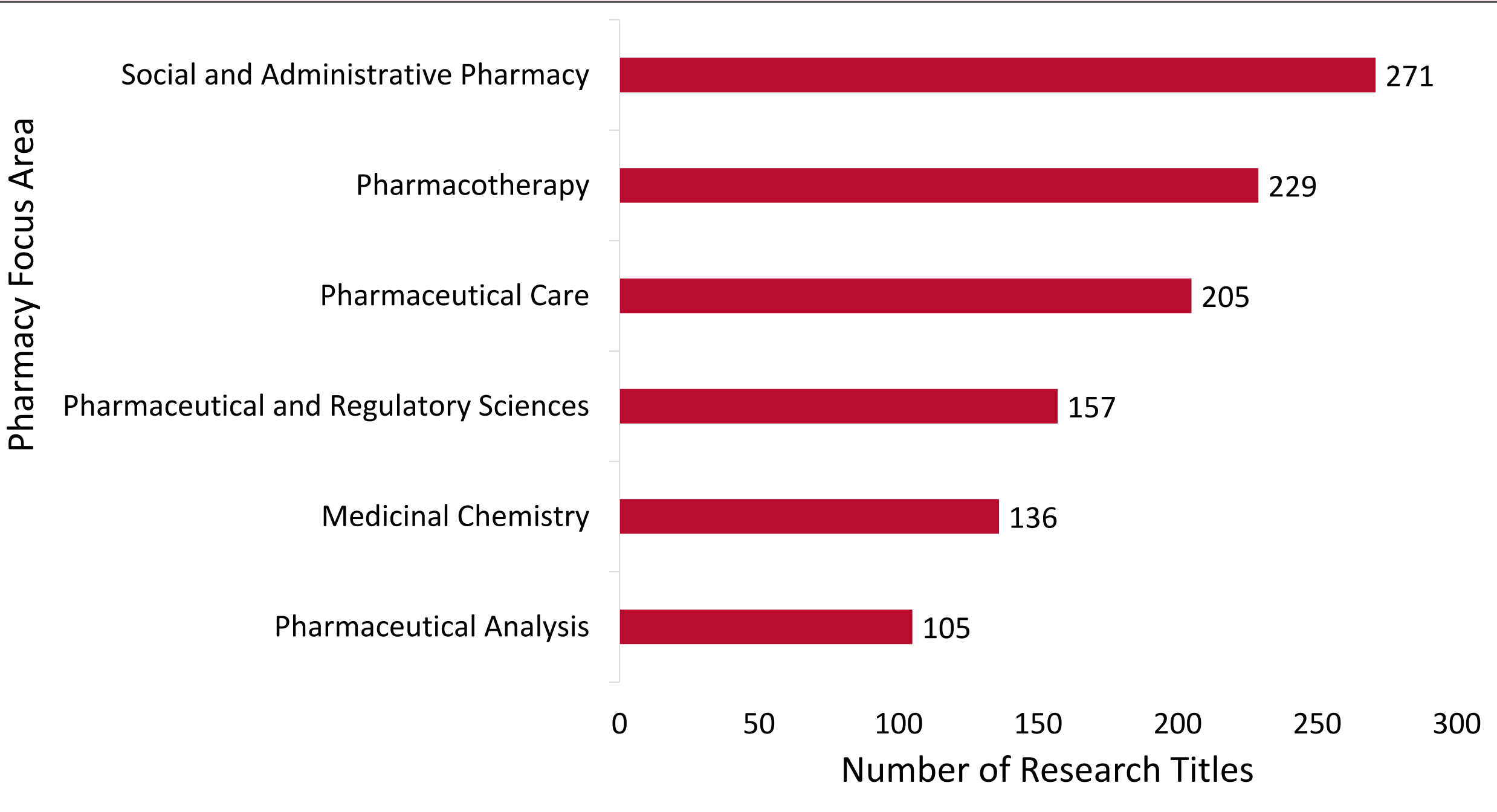


Figure 1: Distribution of Research Projects by Focus Areas (N=1254)

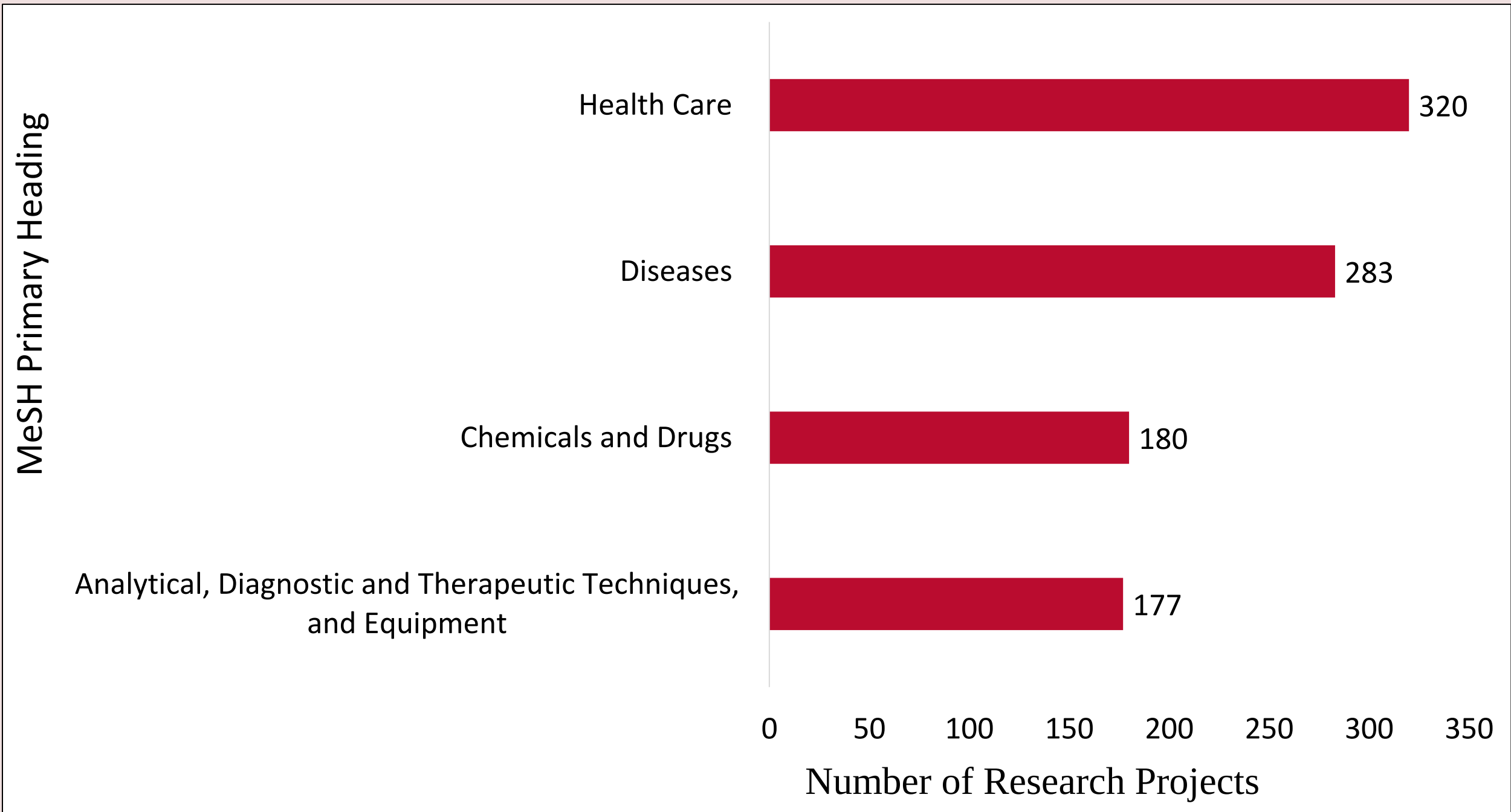


Figure 2: Distribution of Research Projects by MeSH Primary Headings (N=1254)

CONCLUSION

The findings provide insights into historical and emerging trends in pharmacy research that pharmacy students are exposed to during their studies. Identifying the areas of focus provides an opportunity to develop frameworks for collaboration, innovation and evidence-based healthcare practices. By creating an accessible index, this study bridges past research with ongoing and future research.