

Table 7 Implications of the study for policy, practice and research: perspectives of Inspectors

Findings	Implications for policy	Implications for practice	Implications for future research
Inspectors should be pharmacists or have considerable experience. There is a shortage.	Policy to be developed to reflect this view. Joint policy to be developed between health authorities and pharmacy schools	Review of pharmacy degrees in developed countries to ensure the degree provides adequate basic training. Focus on attracting pharmacists to this role	Need for demographic studies to determine the inspection workforce. Understanding the barriers and facilitators to being an inspector.
Perceived as a policing role	Policy to outline other important roles in addition to policing	Change in practice to ensure that the role is not undertaken exclusively as a policing role	The influence of a dominant focus on policing to be further explored in terms of the overall process
Variable levels of practical training in addition to theoretical aspects	Educational policy to be developed which outlines what constitutes effective theoretical and practical training	Practice better supported through practical on job training in addition to the theoretical understanding required	Evaluation of training interventions
Approaches to inspection and process vary markedly along with information provided	Policy to be developed which informs standard inspection	Sharing of reports among inspectors to encourage learning and reduction in variability in amount and format of information delivered	Implementation and evaluation of approaches to reduce inspection variability
Inspectors believe they have adequate power/ authority	Policy required around delegated authority and levels at which inspectors can act. Inability of inspectors to stop marketing authorization and close facilities in some countries negates the point of the inspection	Local and international peer review of decisions regarding inadequate facilities to make the process more robust	Audits of decision and decision-making processes to reduce variability Understand the power differential between inspectors and QA staff and higher management of pharmaceutical facilities and appropriate decision-making
Inspection fees are mostly confidential or fixed: different from QA staff views	Transparent payment policies are required	Consistent and transparent payment practices required	Wide-scale surveys to better understand current payment mechanisms within and across developed countries
Communication: • by letter • language barrier when communicating abroad	Inspection policies need to support the increased use of technology for communicating, producing checklists and reports. Development of cross-country policies for countries of a similar nature. Consistent policy around the use of video and photographs is required.	Internationally recognized standards need to become common practice through interaction between inspectors and authorities in developed and developing countries	Implementation and evaluation of cross-country information-sharing and experiential initiatives
Difficulties with inspections • lack of training or variable training across countries • transportation • insufficient time • salary/reimbursement • no set format for inspection or report	Development of SOPs and written report template formats needed. Training and development policy required to inform compulsory inspector training consistent across developing countries. Work towards international accreditation. Formal examination and licensing policies consistently required across all developing countries	Comprehensive training and educational programmes implemented for inspectors. Periodic inspectors meetings to organize work, reduce deficiencies and outline responsibilities. Links needed between regulatory authority administrators and inspectors in terms of the process, reports and forms used and decision-making processes. Meetings between inspection team members before starting the visit to ensure the inspection team is well coordinated with regard to purpose and individual responsibilities.	Evaluation of the impact of training policy implementation and practices in a before and after study