

Committee of Presidents of Medical Colleges

Position Statement on Independent Prescribing

August, 2014

The Committee of Presidents of Medical Colleges supports safe and effective prescribing and wise use of medicines in Australian health care.

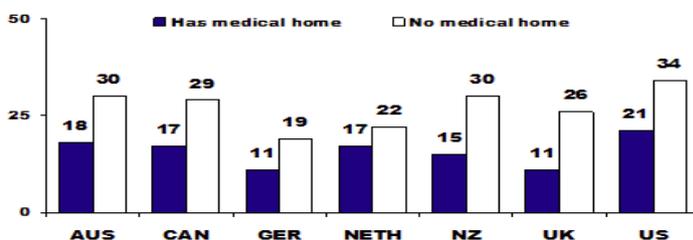
Professional evidence-based prescribing is a complex skill characterised by adequate training which results in accurate diagnosis, knowledge of interactions and side effects and appropriate review. Delegated prescribing includes medical oversight which provides confidence around these issues and minimises risks likely to negatively impact on patient safety.

The maintenance of patient safety and quality care must underpin all prescribing. It has been estimated that over 1.5 million Australians suffer adverse events from medicines each year resulting in at least 400,000 visits to general practitioners and approximately 19,000 hospital admissions. The evidence shows that multiple prescribers increase the chance of adverse drug events where the more prescribers an individual has, the greater the risk of errors and fragmentation of care including the medical record. Polypharmacy is another major risk factor. The Commonwealth Fund graph below shows that there are far fewer patient reported safety errors when patients have a medical home.

Figure 11. Safety: Any Patient-Reported Error

Base: Adults with chronic condition

Percent any medical, medication, or lab error



Note: Errors include medical mistake, wrong medication/dose, or lab/diagnostic errors. Medical home includes having a regular provider that knows you, is easy to contact, and coordinates your care.
Source: 2007 Commonwealth Fund International Health Policy Survey.
Data collection: Harris Interactive, Inc.

CPMC is concerned about the lack of evidence to support an expansion of prescribing rights to non-medical staff based on issues of workforce shortage, or access to medication, or to improve health system effectiveness or efficiency. The case for such an expansion is based on assumption alone.

Any expansion of non-medical prescribing should only occur within a profession's specified scope of practice, under medical supervision and based on standards which are legislated and underpinned by a national prescription monitoring and surveillance system for all prescribers.

CPMC is concerned that independent prescribing by non-medical health professionals may put patient safety and quality care at risk a result of fragmented care and lack of appropriately qualified supervision.

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