

## News Update

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### News Round-Up Archive 2004

#### Open learning programme will start in September 17/06/04

The first students to enter an e-learning nurse prescribing programme, using materials developed by Emap Healthcare Open Learning in collaboration with the University of Stirling, will commence their studies in September. Although the amount of study required is the same as for the taught course, direct contact days are reduced to approximately six.

The first intakes are expected at the University of Stirling in September and University College Winchester in October. A number of other universities are actively pursuing validation and approval and will announce their plans in due course.

Further information can be obtained from [open.learning@emap.com](mailto:open.learning@emap.com) or tel: 020 7874 0600 (please quote reference NPCO).

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#### Proposed changes to medicines that optometrists can supply 17/06/04

A consultation proposing amendments to the range of medicines that optometrists can sell, supply or administer has been published by the Department of Health (DH) and the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA; [1]).

Exemptions set out in medicines legislation allow optometrists to sell or supply all GSL and P medicines and a range of prescription-only medicines (POMs), in the course of their professional practice and in an emergency. The specified POMs can also be sold or supplied by a retail pharmacy on presentation of an order signed by a registered ophthalmic optician.

These new proposals are not about prescribing per se, but should be read in conjunction with the consultation on supplementary prescribing (see here [2]).

This consultation proposes:

- Updating the list of POMs that optometrists may sell, supply or write orders for (sale or supply being subject to the requirements that it is in the course of professional practice and in an emergency). Several deletions of substances that are no longer commercially available are proposed, along with the addition of fusidic acid.
- Allowing optometrists who have undertaken extended training and are accredited by the General Optical Council (GOC) to sell or supply additional POMs in the course of their professional practice and in an emergency, or to write orders for these POMs. The additional POMs include antibiotics and would allow optometrists to manage conditions including infective conjunctivitis, allergic conjunctivitis, blepharitis, dry eye and superficial injury.
- Removing the 'emergency' requirement for the sale and supply of P and GSL medicines so that they could be sold or supplied direct to patients by an optometrist for non-emergency conditions.

The consultation period closes on 27 August.

*eReferences*

1. <http://medicines.mhra.gov.uk/inforesources/publications/mlx306.doc>
2. [http://www.nurse-prescriber.co.uk/news/news\\_roundup2004.htm#119-2](http://www.nurse-prescriber.co.uk/news/news_roundup2004.htm#119-2)

doi:10.1017/S1467115804001191

**NPC publishes competency framework for prescribing optometrists 17/06/04**

The National Prescribing Centre (NPC) has published an outline competency framework for prescribing pharmacists that can be adapted according to local needs (see here [1]). It contains three competency areas:

- The Consultation – clinical and pharmaceutical knowledge; establishing options; communicating with patients
- Prescribing Effectively – prescribing safely; prescribing professionally; improving prescribing practice; information in context
- Prescribing in Context – the NHS in context; the team and individual context.

It also contains modifications to the statements for optometrist supplementary prescribers.

*eReference*

1. <http://www.npc.co.uk/publications/optometrist/optometrist.htm>

doi:10.1017/S1467115804001208

**Nearly 2400 EFNPs now registered 17/06/04**

Nearly 2400 nurses are now registered with the NMC as Extended Formulary Nurse Prescribers (EFNPs), with more than 1700 of these also qualified as supplementary prescribers, according to the Department of Health's updated figures, published on 4 June (see here [1]). Another 1000 or so more nurses are undertaking the training at present. About 100 pharmacists have qualified as supplementary prescribers, according to the document, which also says that the planned changes to allow the inclusion of controlled drugs in Clinical Management Plans are now expected later this year.

*eReference*

1. <http://www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/08/38/92/04083892.pdf>

doi:10.1017/S146711580400121X

**DH publishes updated standards and contacts for nurse prescribing 17/06/04**

The NMC has updated its standards for nurse independent and supplementary prescribing (see here [1]). The document gives advice on deciding which nurses should be nominated for training as prescribers.

An updated list of Workforce Development Confederation contacts [2] on nurse prescribing and an updated list of medicines prescribable through the Nurse Prescribers' Extended Formulary [3] are also now available on the Department of Health site.

*eReferences*

1. [http://www.dh.gov.uk/PolicyAndGuidance/MedicinesPharmacyAndIndustry/Prescriptions/NursingPrescribing/NursingPrescribingArticle/fs/en?CONTENT\\_ID=4068221&chk=W2z9hc](http://www.dh.gov.uk/PolicyAndGuidance/MedicinesPharmacyAndIndustry/Prescriptions/NursingPrescribing/NursingPrescribingArticle/fs/en?CONTENT_ID=4068221&chk=W2z9hc)
2. <http://www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/08/38/84/04083884.pdf>
3. <http://www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/08/38/85/04083885.pdf>

doi:10.1017/S1467115804001221

### **Safety deficiencies in GP computer prescribing systems 01/06/04**

The computer prescribing systems used in GPs surgeries have serious failings in their safety features, according to recent research (see BMJ article [1]).

The researchers tested four of the commonly used systems against 18 prescribing scenarios to see what alerts they produced. The scenarios included aspirin being prescribed for a child aged 8 and methotrexate being prescribed in pregnancy. None of the systems produced alerts for all scenarios, and none produced warnings for all 10 of the cases where drug pairs with similar names were considered.

An accompanying commentary [2] points out that all these systems could be improved but that listing every contraindication for a drug, for example, might overwhelm the user with alerts which are then ignored. Timely and relevant warnings are the key.

See here [3] and [4] for news items about computer-generated scripts for nurses

#### *eReferences*

1. <http://bmj.bmjournals.com/cgi/content/full/328/7449/1171>
2. <http://bmj.bmjournals.com/cgi/content/full/328/7449/1172>
3. [http://www.nurse-prescriber.co.uk/news/news\\_roundup2004.htm#119-1](http://www.nurse-prescriber.co.uk/news/news_roundup2004.htm#119-1)
4. [http://www.nurse-prescriber.co.uk/news/news\\_roundup.htm#115-4](http://www.nurse-prescriber.co.uk/news/news_roundup.htm#115-4)

doi:10.1017/S1467115804001233

### **e-learning programme for pharmacist supplementary prescribers 01/06/04**

The Centre for Pharmacy Postgraduate Education (CPPE) at the University of Manchester has developed an e-learning supplementary prescribing programme for pharmacists (see here [1]). Accredited higher education institutions can arrange licensed access to the programme.

#### *eReference*

1. <http://www.cppe.man.ac.uk/news/SPN.htm>

doi:10.1017/S1467115804001245

### **Conference announcement: A Practical Guide to Nurse Led Care and Clinics in Cardiology 01/06/04**

A one-day conference entitled 'A Practical Guide to Nurse Led Care and Clinics in Cardiology' will be held on 12 July at the Royal College of Nursing and includes sessions on nurse prescribing in cardiology and case studies of nurse led care and clinics (see here [1]).

#### *eReference*

1. <http://www.healthcare-events.co.uk/conferences/confdisplay.asp?id=281>

doi:10.1017/S1467115804001257

### **Prescribing nurses could replace SHOs in critical care units 01/06/04**

Nurses with extending prescribing responsibilities may be able to replace Senior House Officers (SHOs) in critical care units, according to the results of a pilot project to reduce junior doctors' hours in line with the European Working Time Directive (EWTd) reported in 'Nursing Standard' (May 26, p7).

The three cardiac intensive care practitioners provide "first-line medical care" overnight, when the SHO has been withdrawn. They prescribe medicines, and have learned anaesthetic and intubation skills, according to one of the nurses, Lara Manuel, speaking at an NHS Modernisation Agency conference on the EWTd held in London in May.

doi:10.1017/S1467115804001269

### **Children's nurses frustrated at pace of prescribing change 01/06/04**

Legislation setting out what nurses can prescribe for children has failed to keep pace with clinical practice, according to delegates at a nurse prescribing workshop held during a British National Formulary conference 'Good Medicine for Children', held in London in May ('Nursing Times', 25 May, p5).

The issue of 'off-license' prescribing was particularly frustrating, as nurses often give prescribing advice to doctors but are not able to prescribe themselves even when they have the relevant qualifications. Maureen Morgan, lead nurse in paediatrics for the Department of Health, confirmed that the Committee on Safety of Medicines was reviewing the prescribing of drugs off-license. She was also reported as saying, 'Legislation has not kept pace with practice. But we've got to get it right so that means things move slowly'.

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### **Concerns about simvastatin going OTC 01/06/04**

Both the 'British Medical Journal' and 'The Lancet' have published concerns about the decision to reclassify simvastatin 10 mg from a prescription-only to an over-the-counter (OTC) preparation (BMJ article [1]: The Lancet article [2]). It will be sold in pharmacies to people at moderate risk of coronary heart disease.

The concerns expressed include the lack of trials of OTC statins in the primary prevention of heart disease, whether the dose is too low, whether the pharmacist will be able to do a proper risk assessment, and a possible increase in inequality.

#### *eReferences*

1. <http://bmj.bmjournals.com/cgi/content/full/328/7450/1221-b>
2. [http://www.thelancet.com/journal/vol363/iss9422/full/llan.363.9422.editorial\\_and\\_review.29675.1](http://www.thelancet.com/journal/vol363/iss9422/full/llan.363.9422.editorial_and_review.29675.1)

doi:10.1017/S1467115804001282

### **Mental health nurse prescribing needs more research 01/06/04**

More research is needed into mental health nurse prescribing, with the benefits for patients as yet unproven, according to a speaker at the Mental Health Nurses Association's annual conference. Richard Gray, co-chair of the National Institute for Mental Health's mental health nurses prescribing group, said that there is some US evidence that nurses prescribing in this field can perform as well as doctors but that it is not conclusive, said the report in 'Nursing Standard' [1] (May 12, p6).

#### *eReference*

1. <http://www.nursing-standard.co.uk/>

doi:10.1017/S1467115804001294

### **CMPs do not need physical signatures 01/06/04**

Clinical Management Plans (CMPs) do not have to be physically signed by the supplementary or independent prescribers or the patient, the Department of Health policy lead for extending prescribing responsibilities told a prescribing conference in Cambridge in April (The Pharmaceutical Journal [1] 10 April, p435). Paul Robinson said that the plan must include an indication that all parties have agreed to it and that the requirements for CMPs give 'incredible flexibility', with the doctor being able to delegate a little or a lot of responsibility. Trudy Granby of the National Prescribing Centre added that CMPs do not have to exist in paper format; electronic versions will be sufficient.

#### *eReference*

1. <http://www.pharmj.com/>

doi:10.1017/S1467115804001300

**Independent prescribing for pharmacists to start next year 01/06/04**

The Department of Health (DH) has confirmed that independent prescribing for pharmacists will begin in 2005, according to a report in 'The Pharmaceutical Journal'[1] (10 April, p435). Paul Robinson from the DH was speaking at a prescribing conference in Cambridge in April and said that a consultation would take place later this year.

*eReference*

1. <http://www.pharmj.com/>

doi:10.1017/S1467115804001312

**Conference announcement: 5th National Conference for Primary Care Prescribing Advisors 01/06/04**

This event, to be held in Nottingham on 17 and 18 June, includes a session on non-medical prescribing (<http://www.npc.co.uk>).

doi:10.1017/S1467115804001324

**Drug Tariff now online 01/06/04**

An electronic version of the Drug Tariff is now available online (between 08:30 and 16:30 Monday–Friday excluding Bank Holidays) on the Prescription Pricing Authority's website (see here [1]). It is searchable and has an index.

*eReference*

1. [http://www.ppa.org.uk/ppa/edt\\_intro.htm](http://www.ppa.org.uk/ppa/edt_intro.htm)

doi:10.1017/S1467115804001336