

Principles and practice of nurse prescribing.

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Introduction

About this book/who is this book for?

This textbook on the principles and practice of prescribing is written for pre-registration nursing students in all fields of practice, student midwives and health professionals who are undertaking prescribing programmes as part of their continuing development.

Why Principles and Practice of Nurse Prescribing?

The Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC, 2018a) Code expects all registrants to:

prescribe, advise on, or provide medicines or treatment, including repeat prescriptions (only if you are suitably qualified) if you have enough knowledge of that person's health and are satisfied that the medicines or treatment serve that person's health needs.

Prescribing by level one registered nurses has evolved considerably over the last 20 years. The **NMC** (2018b) standards for proficiency for the future nurse have an ambition for the newly qualified nurse to be prescribing ready at the point of registration. Within the first year of qualification, they could potentially undertake a prescribing qualification to prescribe from a limited formulary. Furthermore, after being qualified for one year, a registered nurse or midwife can progress to undertake a prescribing course that will allow them to prescribe from the full British National Formulary (**BNF**), with the exception of some specific controlled drugs (NMC, 2018c). Becoming a prescriber is by no means automatic and it is essential that the governance structures are in place to enable practitioners to undertake and be adequately supported throughout a prescribing programme (NMC, 2018c).

Prescribing related proficiencies have been identified to enable undergraduate nurses to be 'prescribing ready' at the point of registration. To progress to a prescribing qualification, the NMC (2018c) have adopted the Competency Framework for all prescribers (Royal Pharmaceutical Society (**RPS**)). This **RPS** framework was originally published by

the National Prescribing Centre/National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence in 2012, was updated by the RPS in 2016 for all regulators and professional bodies and was reviewed again in 2021. This book will therefore consider the NMC Future Nurse: Standards of Proficiency for Registered Nurses (NMC, 2018b), Standards for Prescribing Programmes (NMC, 2018d) and the RPS (2021a) Competency Framework for All Prescribers.

Book structure

This book is structured so that it will help you to understand and meet selected NMC proficiencies for the future nurse and address the RPS (2021a) Competency Framework for prescribers. The book has eight chapters and each chapter has a range of activities for you to reflect on your practice and support the application of theory to practice. The relevant proficiencies and competencies are presented at the start of each chapter so you can clearly see which ones are addressed.

Chapter 1 provides an overview of the professional context of prescribing. This chapter is framed around the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) standards and the Royal Pharmaceutical Society's Competency Framework for All Prescribers, and provides an overview of the policy context and history. The de Silva family is introduced who will be used as a case study within many of the chapters.

Chapter 2 explores some of the underpinning legislation concerning prescribing. The importance of knowing your limitations and prescribing within your scope of practice is highlighted. Consent, mental capacity and autonomy are explored in relation to prescribing for adults and children and the requirements of a legal prescription are outlined. Ethical principles underpinning prescribing practice are explored.

Chapter 3 outlines a systematic approach to the process of decision-making as requiring a structured approach. A new model, RAPID-CASE, to aid prescribing decisions which integrates the features from consultation models, the original 'prescribing pyramid' (NPC, 1999b) and the Competency Framework for all prescribers is introduced.

Chapter 4 explores the evidence base that underpins prescribing and aspects of its clinical governance. Practitioners need to be able to demonstrate they have underpinned their prescribing decisions with recognised, reliable and appropriate evidence sources.

Chapter 5 includes core pharmacology principles and encourages readers to explore various methods and further resources to help embed the learning. Specific pharmacological topics to be covered include: routes of administration; pharmacokinetics; pharmacodynamics; drug effects; and pharmacology across the lifespan.

Chapter 6 explores the public health role of nurse prescribers and considers the responsibilities of prescribers in the context of population health. Specific public health issues such as antimicrobial stewardship are discussed. Teamworking in the context of prescribing practice is also considered.

Chapter 7 applies a structured approach to demonstrate the assessment of one example condition that can be prescribed for from the Nurse Prescribers' Formulary. Additional scenarios are used to prompt critical thinking around some of the other items you may be prescribing in the future within the context of your scope of practice.

Chapter 8 considers your accountability and methods by which to keep up to date as a prescriber linked to the NMC revalidation requirements.

It is important to recognise that some of the chapters are interlinked. In particular, Chapter 7 provides a worked example based on the application of RAPID-CASE introduced in Chapter 3.

Learning features

Learning from reading text is not always easy. Therefore, to provide variety and to assist with the development of independent learning skills and the application of theory to practice, this book contains activities, case studies, scenarios, further reading, useful websites and other materials to enable you to participate in your own learning. You will need to develop your own study skills and 'learn how to learn' to get the best from the material. The book cannot provide all the answers – but instead provides a framework for your learning.

The activities in the book will in particular help you to make sense of, and learn about, the material being presented. Some activities ask you to reflect on aspects of practice, or your experience of it, or the people or situations you encounter. *Reflection* is an essential skill in nursing, and it helps you to understand the world around you and often to identify how things might be improved. Other activities will help you develop key graduate skills such as your ability to *think critically* about a topic in order to challenge received wisdom, or your ability to *research a topic and find appropriate information and evidence*, and to be able to *make decisions* using that evidence in situations that are often difficult and time-pressured.

All the activities require you to take a break from reading the text, think through the issues presented and carry out some independent study, possibly using the internet. Where appropriate, there are sample answers presented at the end of each chapter, and these will help you to understand more fully your own reflections and independent study. Academic study always requires independent work; attending lectures will never be enough to be successful on your programme, and these activities will help to deepen your knowledge and understanding of the issues under scrutiny and give you practice at working on your own.

Introduction

You might want to think about completing these activities as part of your personal development plan (PDP) or portfolio. After completing the activity write it up in your PDP or portfolio in a section devoted to that particular skill, then look back over time to see how far you are developing. You may also wish to start a 'personal formulary' of medicines and products you have gained familiarity with and are comfortable with administering, providing advice about or prescribing (when you have the qualification). You can also do more of the activities for a key skill that you have identified a weakness in, which will help build your skill and confidence in this area.

This book also contains a glossary on page 173 to assist you with unfamiliar terms. Glossary terms are in bold in the first instance that they appear.

We hope you enjoy this book and that through engaging with the range of activities provided this prepares your transition to becoming a future prescriber.