

PRACTICAL PRESCRIBING

Molly Courtenay helps resolve everyday issues for nurse prescribers



Q I am a community matron and very interested in undertaking the independent/supplementary prescribing

training programme. I am unsure, however, whether I need to undertake a module in physical assessment and diagnosis before I do so. Can you give me some advice?

A The NMC Standards of Proficiency for Nurse and Midwife Prescribers state that

prior to undertaking the prescribing course, your employer must be able to confirm that you are competent to take a patient's history, undertake a physical assessment and, diagnose.¹

Although you do not have to undertake a physical assessment and diagnosis module, NMC guidance says that higher education institutions may wish to provide modules to prepare registrants in physical assessment and diagnosis before they access the prescribing programme.

Therefore, if your manager has

suggested that you should undertake such a module and your local higher education institution provides this training, you will need to do so.

There is some evidence to suggest that where prescribers work with patients with a broad range of conditions, as is the case for community matrons, difficulties have been experienced defining individuals' level of competence or scope of practice.²

Therefore, undertaking a physical assessment and diagnostic module prior to prescribing

training may well help with these issues.

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- Please send prescribing related questions to sarah.wild@haymarket.com

References

1. NMC. Standards of Proficiency for Nurse and Midwife Prescribers. London: NMC; 2006.
2. Courtenay, M et al. Developing multi-professional prescribing (unpublished). Guildford: The University of Surrey; 2010.