

## ***Reducing Paediatric Prescribing Errors: The role of a Pharmacist led educational program for trainee Doctors***

*Background:* Safe and effective prescribing is a duty of care for all doctors, and it is the duty of healthcare employers to ensure that prescribers receive the education and support that they need. Prescribing for children can present additional challenges to trainee doctors who may have previously only prescribed for adults. The Pharmacist led Paediatric Prescribing Teaching and Competency Assessment program at Royal Manchester Children's Hospital was developed to address these challenges and increase patient safety.

*Aims:* The purpose of this study was to confirm the necessity of the educational program and evaluate its effectiveness. By identifying the common errors made, the educational program can be tailored to meet the needs of trainee doctors and improve prescribing.

*Results:* The results of the competency assessments taken by 42 Foundation Doctors and 31 Registrars in February 2012 were systematically reviewed. In total 365 prescriptions (5 per assessment) were evaluated. Prescribing errors were categorised as minor or major, and areas where errors occurred most frequently were identified. 67% of the candidates received an overall pass mark for the assessment and were considered competent in paediatric prescribing. 24% of all prescriptions contained at least one major error and were classified as unsatisfactory. Errors most commonly occurred in prescribing IV antibiotics and infusions; 67% of candidates were unable to do so correctly. The most common minor error was not documenting the course length or indication for treatment.

*Conclusions:* The study confirms the need for teaching and competency assessments in paediatric prescribing. It is clear that trainee doctors require education and support in this area, and mandatory educational programs may play a significant role in reducing prescribing errors rate. As a result of this study the educational program at Royal Manchester Children's Hospital will be improved and results from future tests will be audited.

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