

Confidence not accurate measure of prescribing competence

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(HealthDay)—For medical students, self-reported confidence in prescribing only weakly correlates with actual competence, according to a study published online Feb. 4 in *The Journal of Clinical Pharmacology*.

David J. Brinkman, from the Research and Expertise Center In Pharmacotherapy Education in Amsterdam, and colleagues assessed competence in prescribing skills for 403 fourth-year [medical students](#) in a formative, simulated examination using a 10-point scale. Students were asked to rate their confidence afterwards. The assessments were compared with self-confidence ratings.

The researchers found that the prescribing performance was adequate overall (7.0 ± 0.8), but students lacked confidence in two essential

prescribing skills (verifying the treatment suitability and choosing the correct treatment). A weak positive correlation was seen between self-reported confidence and actual competence ($r = 0.2$; P

"This study suggests that self-reported confidence is not an accurate measure of prescribing competence, and that students lack insight into their own strengths and weaknesses in prescribing," the authors write. "Future studies should focus on developing validated and reliable instruments so that [students](#) can assess their prescribing skills."

More information: [Abstract](#)
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