

National assessment of prescribing competence will contribute to future patient safety

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An independent review of the Prescribing Safety Assessment has found that it increases the attention paid by students and faculty to accurate prescribing, and allows them to demonstrate competencies in the safe

and effective use of medicines. According to the report's author, the assessment will contribute to patient safety and reduce harm in the years to come.

The Prescribing Safety Assessment is the online [assessment](#) of competency in the safe and effective prescribing of medicines, taken by final-year medical students and by overseas graduates coming to the UK to work as Foundation Year 1 doctors. It is led by the British Pharmacological Society and MSC Assessment and has received additional funding from Health Education England and NHS Education Scotland.

The assessment was created after a 2009 study from the General Medical Council found that 9% of hospital prescriptions contained errors. Subsequent research also showed that prescribing is the area of the Foundation Doctor role which graduates find the most challenging. The Prescribing Safety Assessment was developed to address this problem and has been compulsory for all new doctors since 2016.

The review was conducted by Professor John McLachlan, Professor of Medical Education in the School of Medicine at the University of Central Lancashire. He said:

"I'm pleased to be able to confirm that it is a high-quality process that will undoubtedly contribute to [patient safety](#) in the future."

The independent review found that the processes underlying the assessment's development, standard setting and delivery are of a high standard, and comparable with other national level tests.

Professor David Webb, Co-Chair of the Prescribing Safety Assessment Executive and past President of the British Pharmacological Society, said:

"This independent review of the Prescribing Safety Assessment confirms the benefits of creating a robust process for producing items and running assessments. Taking the report's recommendations into account, and after years of investment, it is reassuring to know that the assessment is not only an excellent measure of competency in safe prescribing, but also that it will help ensure patient [safety](#) in the years to come."

Professor Jenny Higham, Co-Chair of the PSA Executive, Chair of the Medical Schools Council and member of the MSC Assessment Board, said:

"The Prescribing Safety Assessment's development shows the success of UK medical schools in pooling their expertise to a common goal. We are delighted that students have reported the positive educational impact the Prescribing Safety Assessment has had on their prescribing knowledge. This review confirms its strength as an assessment."

More information: Prescribing Safety Assessment:
prescribingsafetyassessment.ac.uk/

Provided by British Pharmacological Society

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