Nurse Prescribing

Nurse Prescribing

Edited by Jennifer L. Humphries and Joyce Green

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To Steve, Tristram and Geraint

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Ros undertakes prescribing reviews within primary care for GPs and community and practice nurses. She works jointly with nurse practitioners on anticoagulant and medication review clinics, is involved in training nurse prescribers from the initial pilot work in Bolton and subsequently, and has analysed nurse prescribing data for the Department of Health. She has also lectured to a variety of health professionals on the prescribing of wound care, incontinence and stoma products, and has written bulletins on these topics for the National Prescribing Centre.

Lorraine Berry RGN, DipHV

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Lorraine qualified as a health visitor at the same time as the pilot for nurse prescribing commenced in Bolton. As an experienced nurse prescriber, she has addressed many conferences on the subject. She has participated in the nurse prescribing course at Manchester Metropolitan University by sharing her skills and experiences with student nurse prescribers. She works with a GP practice in a dual role as health visitor and nurse practitioner, and is a skilled speaker.

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Mark Campbell is Prescribing Unit Manager in the Regional Drug and Therapeutics Centre, Newcastle upon Tyne, which undertakes a wide range of work on prescribing and therapeutics on behalf of the Northern and Yorkshire Regional Office of the NHS Executive, including performance management, new drug evaluation, analysis and research.

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Joyce has been involved with community nurse education for many years and has been a course leader for both district nursing and practice nursing. She is currently joint course leader for the nurse prescribing course and was a member of the ENB Nurse Prescribing Steering Group. She was involved in the writing of the current course and participated in satelliting the approved course at Manchester Metropolitan University to seven other institutions in the third phase of the introduction of nurse prescribing. She has recently been a member of the ENB Working Group (1997/98) revising the Nurse Prescribing Open Learning Pack.

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Jennifer has been teaching in community nurse education for the past 8 years. She was involved in developing and delivering the nurse prescribing course and, with Joyce Green, participated in satelliting the approved course at Manchester Metropolitan University to seven other institutions in the third phase of the introduction of nurse prescribing.

Rita Hurst SRN, NDNCert

District Nursing Sister, Community Healthcare, Bolton NHS Trust

Rita has been a district nurse for 17 years. She became one of the first community nurses in the country to prescribe when the GP practice she worked with was chosen as one of the eight pilot sites in 1994. She has addressed many conferences and is an experienced speaker on the subject of nurse prescribing. She has recently been part of the ENB Working Group (1997/98) revising the Nurse Prescribing Open Learning Pack.

Joel Richman BA, MA(Econ), PhD

Joel is a founder member of Manchester Polytechnic, now the Manchester Metropolitan University. Publications include: Traffic Wardens: An Ethnography of Street Administration (Manchester University Press, 1983), Medicine and Health (Longman, 1987) and Health (Macmillan, 1992). He has made contributions to several edited books and journals. Before retirement, Joel was awarded a chair in medical sociology and anthropology. As emeritus professor, he continues to work part time in the Department of Health Care Studies at Manchester Metropolitan University.

David Skidmore MSc, PhD, RN, DipN, CertEd, DipPE

Head of Department of Health Care Studies, Manchester Metropolitan University

David was a community psychiatric nurse and behavioural therapist in the early 1970s prior to taking up full-time study in medical sociology. He subsequently fell into an academic career and has been involved with community nursing research for some 25 years. His interest in the education and development of nursing practice had its genesis in community research in the 1980s, and he has been actively involved in this field of research ever since.

Foreword

In 1986 I started what was to become the long haul to allow nurses to prescribe. It seemed logical, sensible and fairly easy to achieve. A survey of community nurses conducted in 1985 showed that 30 per cent cleaned the surgery and for GPs the most important job of the nurse was to fill his or her bag. Nurse prescribing became a giant cultural hurdle to turn handmaidens into autonomous practitioners.

While there was enthusiasm for the project from many nurses and doctors, others found the change difficult, not least the Treasury, many politicians and parts of the NHS establishment. It was part of the feminist revolution which was being fought in every walk of life from the Church of England to cricket clubs. Nurse prescribing triggered a wholesale reassessment of the role of nurses, their training and the move to a profession qualified with degrees in nursing.

The transition has not been easy; long delays, primary legislation and dealing with the implications for nearly half a million nurses. We are now at the stage where all community nurses are or will soon be able to prescribe, and the move towards enabling all specialist nurses to take that responsibility is unstoppable.

It is a quiet, continuing revolution which must not lose its momentum, because it not only strengthens team work but does so much to improve health care to all the people of this country.

BARONESS CUMBERLEGE

Preface

Nurse prescribing is an innovative project which has government support and, although at the time of writing it is restricted to those district nurses and health visitors who have undergone specialised training, the aim of this book is to provide access to a range of perspectives on nurse prescribing and to promote discourse on these issues. It takes a critical look at the development and implications of nurse prescribing, discussing features relating to patients and clients, the nurses themselves and the nursing profession in general. Relevant professional issues are examined and comprehensively reviewed within the framework of current community nursing practice.

By adopting a broad approach to nurse prescribing, the intention is to appeal to all health care professionals interested in developments in community and primary health care. Although aimed primarily at post-registration community nurses and as a necessary text for all those undertaking a nurse prescribing course, because nurse prescribing is a momentous evolution in nursing practice, we would consider this book to be essential supplementary reading for both student nurses and other post-registration students. The *Scope of Professional Practice* (UKCC, 1992) outlines the need for practice and education to be sensitive, relevant and responsive to the changing needs of patients and clients. Nurse prescribing is one such initiative and it behoves all nurses and health care professionals to be aware of contemporary issues affecting nursing practice and patient/client care.

All the chapters have been written by different authors and because of this readers may perceive variations in style and presentation of material. It has not been our intention to edit out these differences, as each contributor has their own unique body of knowledge and expertise to add to the nurse prescribing discussion. By offering a range of perspectives, this should enrich the content enabling readers, whether current prescribers or not, to consider prescribing in the context of their professional role and to reflect on the implications from both local and national perspectives.

Chapter 1 sets the scene by presenting a historical overview of the nurse prescribing initiative within a legislative framework, outlining the development of the training programme and indicating how nurse prescribing fits in with contemporary community nursing practice.

Chapter 2 covers the very important issues of ethical and legal principles and accountability.

In Chapter 3 assessment and evaluation strategies are discussed in some detail and the arguments presented clearly demonstrate how these strategies can be applied to nurse prescribing and assist community nurses in the decision-making process.

Chapter 4 offers a rich source of practical information on the responsibilities of prescribing including guidance for prescription writing, generic prescribing and independent reference sources for prescribers.

Chapter 5 discusses some of the financial implications of prescribing and the ways in which nurse prescribing is being monitored. Some national and international perspectives are also considered.

Chapter 6 focuses on non-compliance and who is the non-compliant patient. A review of the extensive research in this area, although naturally medically based, has much to offer prescribing nurses and is intended to increase awareness and stimulate debate.

The reality of nurse prescribing is illustrated in Chapter 7 through the experiences of prescribing nurses participating in the demonstration project. Case examples of prescribing situations are included, focusing the reader on some of the pertinent issues that nurse prescribing raises and enabling reflection on current practice.

Chapter 8 takes a considered look at the extended role of the nurse by analysing the role of specialist practitioners and putting nurse prescribing as the central focus of this debate. This poses many questions about which nurses should be able to prescribe, how far the nurse's role should progress, the benefits for patients/clients and the implications for the nursing profession. The intention is to provoke the reader to take a critical look at nursing and the possible implications of extending the scope of clinical practice.

The final chapter, Chapter 9, examines the most recent developments that have occurred in the sphere of nurse prescribing. It

also looks at current issues and considers some possible future implications for nursing practice.

The nurse prescribing initiative is a changing one and the Crown Reviews report (DoH, 1998) has addressed the issue of group protocols. At the time of writing we are eagerly awaiting the next report of the working group chaired by June Crown set up by the government to review prescribing, supply and administration of medicines. It is hoped that this group, who are considering the future of nurse prescribing alongside other prescribing issues, will indicate the way forward for nurses and the further development of the nurse prescribing project.

The text set out to be an edited compilation of practical and theoretical perspectives relating to nurse prescribing, supported by reference to relevant reading and research. We hope that we have achieved our objective and that readers will find it both interesting and informative.

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- UKCC (1992) *Scope of Professional Practice*. UKCC, London.