

Non-medical prescribers effective in management of chronic disease

| | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Clinical Question | Compared to medical (usual care) prescribers, how effective are non-medical prescribers for managing acute and chronic health conditions in primary and secondary care settings? |
| Bottom Line | <p>Non-medical prescribers practising in a variety of settings and with varying but high levels of prescribing autonomy, achieved comparable outcomes in the management of chronic disease and preventive health care. Non-medical prescribers delivered comparable outcomes to medical prescribers for systolic blood pressure, glycated haemoglobin, low-density lipoprotein, medication adherence, patient satisfaction, and general quality of life. Pharmacists and nurses were able to deliver comparable prescribing outcomes with varying levels of undergraduate, postgraduate, and specific on-the-job training. Non-medical prescribers frequently have medical support available to facilitate a collaborative practice model. Non-medical prescribers across a range of different settings in low-, medium- and high-income countries may be able to assist in meeting the growing burden of chronic disease, or where doctor shortages or scarce health resources exist.</p> |
| Caveat | The uncertainty of evidence in studies reporting adverse events and resource use made it difficult to determine the impact of non-medical prescribers compared to medical prescribers for these outcome measures. |
| Context | A range of health workforce strategies are needed to address health service demands in low-, middle- and high-income countries. Non-medical prescribing involves nurses, pharmacists, allied health professionals, and physician assistants complementing or substituting for doctors in a prescribing role. This is one approach to improve access to medicines. |
| Cochrane Systematic Review | Weeks G et al. Non-medical prescribing versus medical prescribing for acute and chronic disease management in primary and secondary care. Cochrane Reviews, 2016, Issue 11. Art. No.: CD011227.DOI: 10.1002/14651858. CD011227.pub2. This review contains 46 studies involving 37,337 participants. |
