

# Prescribing practices

(April 2021)

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## Rationale

Prescribing medications safely is a central component of most physicians' activities and requires appropriate medical knowledge, skill, professional judgment, and an understanding of the applicable legislation related to prescribing.

## Key Objectives

To safely and effectively manage a patient presenting with a condition that requires prescription medication, the candidate will first undertake a thorough clinical assessment and then apply principles of evidence-based medicine and cost effectiveness in prescribing.

## Enabling Objectives

Given a patient that requires a medication to be prescribed safely and effectively, the candidate will

- undertake a thorough clinical assessment, including:
  - a. a complete medication history, including allergies and intolerances;
  - b. a review for adherence and effectiveness of the patient's current medications;
  - c. address polypharmacy and the options for deprescribing; and
- apply principles of clinical pharmacology in prescribing medication to
  - a. address the effect of comorbidities, current medications, liver and renal function, genetics, age, and pregnancy on the risks and benefits of prescribing the medication;
  - b. apply an evidence-based approach to clinical and cost effectiveness, including prescribing generic medications when appropriate;

- c. anticipate the potential for adverse effects and take steps to mitigate them (e.g., prescribing appropriate routes, strengths, and quantities of medication);
- d. recognize potential medical interactions when prescribing new medications;
- e. recognize barriers to patients access to the medication (e.g., affordability, accessibility, supply) and advocate to resolve these where possible; and
- document the prescription appropriately, including:
  - a. generating a clear and legible prescription that meets legal requirements;
  - b. recognizing common cases of medication errors and how they can be prevented;
  - c. creating contemporaneous clinical notes of prescribing decisions;
  - d. documenting appropriate follow-up plans for review of the effectiveness of the prescribed medication and any adverse effects encountered; and
- communicate with the patient or, if appropriate, their family or caregivers to
  - a. build a therapeutic relationship that encourages adherence but respects the patient's values, beliefs, and expectations about medications and their right to refuse treatment;
  - b. ensure they understand the rationale for the prescription;
  - c. provide them with information about any adverse effects, how to report them, and what they should do if adverse effects occur;
  - d. ensure that those involved in sharing care or transfer of prescribing responsibilities are adequately informed about the prescription.