



The Supply, Administration and Prescribing of Medicines: guidance and advice for the radiography workforce

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Summary

The Society and College of Radiographers (SCoR) publishes this guidance and advice document to make clear the roles and responsibilities of the radiography workforce in the supply, administration and prescribing of medicines. Medicines include contrast agents as well as drugs that might be given before, during or after a diagnostic imaging procedure or before, during or after the treatment period for radiotherapy patients.

Introduction

The Society and College of Radiographers (SCoR) publishes this guidance and advice document to make clear the roles and responsibilities of the radiography workforce in the supply, administration and prescribing of medicines. Medicines include contrast agents as well as drugs that might be given before, during or after a diagnostic imaging procedure or before, during or after the treatment period for radiotherapy patients.

SCoR first published its vision for prescribing in 2001 (Prescribing by Radiographers: A Vision Paper)¹ in response to the publication of the final report of The Review of Prescribing, Supply and Administration of Medicines (Crown II) in March 1999².

Known widely as The Crown Report, the proposals were written to provide a secure way of increasing the range of health care professionals who are authorised to prescribe and hence to improve service delivery, make better use of the skills of staff and thus to contribute to the modernisation of the Health Service. While government accepted the proposals, progress has been slow as far as radiographers are concerned and it is only recently that radiographers could undergo training to qualify as supplementary prescribers. The work leading to radiographers being able to become independent prescribers is still some years away although it is at least on the Department of Health (England)'s work plan (Allied health professions prescribing and medicines supply mechanisms scoping project report, July 2009).

The Current Situation and definitions

The law states that radiographers are allowed to supply and /or administer medicines using Patient

Specific Directions or Patient Group Directions and can train to become Supplementary Prescribers.

Independent Prescribing

Independent Prescribing means that the prescriber takes responsibility for the clinical assessment of the patient, establishing a diagnosis and the clinical management required, as well as prescribing where necessary and the appropriateness of any prescription. Independent Prescribing is not yet an option for radiographers.

Patient Specific Directions (supply or administration)

A Patient Specific Direction (PSD) is a direct written instruction for a named patient and does not require assessment of the patient by the individual instructed before administering, unlike a Patient Group Direction. In primary care, this might be a simple instruction in the patient's notes. Examples in secondary care include instructions on a patient's ward drug chart. If a radiologist writes the type, strength and amount of contrast agent to be given to a named patient then that is a Patient Specific Direction.

Where a Patient Specific Direction exists, there is no need for a Patient Group Direction. Anyone can follow a Patient Specific Direction as long as they are acting in accordance with the directions of an appropriate practitioner (i.e. the radiologist) following patient assessment, and delegation of supply and/or administration.

A Patient Specific Direction can also be used where a Patient Group Direction cannot be used, e.g. where the administration is carried out by a registered professional not covered by a Patient Group Direction or an unregistered healthcare professional, for example, assistant practitioner.

Patient Group Directions (supply or administration)

A Patient Group Direction (PGD) is a written instruction for the supply or administration of medicines to groups of patients who may not be individually identified before presentation for treatment. It is not a form of prescribing and there is no specific training that health professionals must undertake before they are able to work under a Patient Group Direction. However, certain requirements apply to the use of Patient Group Directions.

Patient Group Directions are a way for radiographers to be able to supply and administer most medicines and contrast agents used in imaging and radiotherapy departments. The SCoR website has some examples of Patient Group Directions at: <https://www.sor.org/practice/other-groups/prescribing>

N.B. Only registered health care professionals can use Patient Group Directions. Assistant practitioners are not a registered and regulated workforce and therefore are not allowed to supply or administer under Patient Group Directions

Supplementary Prescribing

Supplementary Prescribing is defined as a voluntary partnership between an independent prescriber (a doctor or dentist) and a supplementary prescriber to implement an agreed patient specific Clinical Management Plan with the patient's agreement.

Radiographers can be supplementary prescribers and radiotherapy radiographers working in Radiotherapy Treatment Review may find this a useful role development which will smooth the patient pathway. Supplementary Prescribers take over the prescribing from an Independent Prescriber under an agreed Clinical Management Plan. In July 2010 the Health Professions Council had 22 radiographers identified as having qualified as supplementary prescribers, most of whom are therapy radiographers.

Training courses have to be approved by The Health Professions Council. They are also responsible for annotating the register to maintain a list of allied health professionals who are qualified as Supplementary Prescribers. www.hpc-uk.org

Department of Health (England) Scoping Project

The Department of Health (England) has published results of a recent scoping project: Allied health professions, prescribing and medicines supply mechanisms scoping research project August 2009³. <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130107105354/http://www.dh.g...>

The recommendations of the project have been accepted and will be progressed. This means that independent prescribing by radiographers will be considered in phase 2 of the project. Independent prescribing by physiotherapists and podiatrists will be in phase 1. SCoR is working to collect evidence to support radiographers being able to train to become independent prescribers. The report of the research project will be published and posted on the SCoR online document library in late 2010.

The Supply, Administration and Prescribing of Medicines Group

The SCoR group is co-chaired by Jancis Kinsman and Sarah Griffiths who are therapy radiographers and supplementary prescribers at Bristol Haematology and Oncology Centre. The group comprises radiographers who are supplementary prescribers (or are in training) and managers, educationalists and clinical radiographers who have an interest in supply, administration and prescribing of medicines.

The group meet twice a year at the headquarters of The Society of Radiographers. Officer and administrative support is provided. Christina Freeman is the professional officer leading on supply, administration and prescribing.

Terms of reference for the group are:

- To provide a forum for supplementary prescribers to be able to provide information and support for each other
- To provide a forum for those supplying/administering under PSDs and PGDs to be able to provide information and support for each other
- To provide information and expertise to the profession on supply, administration and prescribing of medicines
- To provide information to the wider health care environment as appropriate, for example, Departments of Health
- To provide opportunities for maintaining competence and CPD through publishing of information and organising study days as appropriate.

SCoR Policy

It is the policy of the SCoR to support and encourage radiographers to seek opportunities for role development. The professional body believes that the authority to prescribe medicines benefits patients, the service and the profession. A radiographer can develop his or her own scope of practice to include prescribing, provided that he or she is adequately educated and trained and competent to practice (The Scope of Practice, 2009)⁴.

SCoR will continue to work with Departments of Health across the four countries of the UK to promote safe supply, administration and prescribing of medicines by radiographers.

References

1. *Prescribing by Radiographers: A Vision Paper* April 2001 London; CoR
2. *Final report of The Review of Prescribing, Supply & Administration of Medicines (Crown Report)* March 1999 London; DH.
http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyandGuidance/DH_4077151
3. Allied health professions prescribing and medicines supply mechanisms scoping project report July 2009 London; DH <http://www.somed.org/members/AHP2009.pdf>
4. *The Scope of Practice* February 2009 London; SCoR

Resources

Department of Health (England)

DH (England) information on the non-medical prescribing policy can be found at:
<http://www.dh.gov.uk>

Also available as document downloads from the DH website are:

- Outline Curriculum for Training Programmes to prepare Allied Health Professional as Supplementary Prescribers Sept 2004 London;
<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130107105354/http://www.dh.g...>
- Supplementary Prescribing by Nurses, Pharmacists, Chiropodists/Podiatrists, Physiotherapists and Radiographers within the NHS in England May 2005 London; DH
http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130107105354/http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_4110032
- Medicines Matters: A guide to current mechanisms for the prescribing, supply and administration of medicines March 2005 London; DH
http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130107105354/http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_4105222

National electronic Library for Medicines

NeLM hosts Patient Group Directions (PGD) website at:
<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20031220221853/http://portal.n...>

The National Prescribing Centre (NPC)

It has just been announced that the NPC is to join with NICE. Currently the website is operational and includes useful information and documents to download from their websites at:
<http://www.npc.co.uk> and <http://www.nice.org.uk/about/nice-communities/medicines-and-prescribing>

The most useful documents are:

- *Maintaining Competency in Prescribing: An outline framework to help allied health professional supplementary prescribers* July 2004 Liverpool; NPC
- *Supplementary Prescribing- A resource to help healthcare professionals understand the framework and opportunities* April 2003 Liverpool; NPC
- *Patient Group Directions: a practical guide and framework of competencies for all professionals using patient group directions* December 2009 Liverpool NPC
- *Non-medical prescribing by nurses, optometrists, podiatrists and radiographers – A quick guide for commissioners* March 2010 Liverpool; NPC

British Pharmacological Society

The BPS provides guidance and organises conferences and study days which might be useful for radiographer supplementary prescribers. They include non-pharmacists in the prescribers subcommittee (Christina Freeman is currently a member of this group).

Information available on their website at www.bps.ac.uk

Ten Principles of Good Prescribing available from their website www.bps.ac.uk

Nursing & Midwifery Council (NMC)

The NMC has at least two useful downloads from their website at: www.nmc-uk.org

- *What to expect from a nurse or midwife who can prescribe drugs* (August 2006)
- *Standards of proficiency for nurse and midwife prescribers* (February 2005)

Source URL: <https://www.sor.org/learning/document-library/supply-administration-and-prescribing-medicines-guidance-and-advice-radiography-workforce>