

# SCRIPT: An eLearning programme for continuing professional development of general practitioners

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## Background

Medication is the most common intervention in clinical practice. In 2015, community prescriptions cost the National Health Service (NHS) in England alone £9.27 billion, which was an increase from £8.85 billion spent in 2014<sup>[1]</sup>. Medication errors can be defined as *“a failure in the treatment process that leads to, or has the potential to lead to, harm to the patient”*<sup>[2]</sup>. Medication errors account for 10–20% of all adverse events in the NHS, and preventable harm from medicines is estimated by the National Patient Safety Agency (NPSA) (2007) to cost over £750 million annually.

In 2010, the General Medical Council (GMC) commissioned a study to investigate the prevalence and nature of prescribing and monitoring errors in general practice. In the PRACTICE study<sup>[3]</sup>, 6,048 unique prescription items were examined for 1,777 patients. Findings from the research suggested that 1 in 20 prescription items contained either a prescribing or monitoring error, affecting 1 in 8 patients. Although the majority of these errors were judged to be either of mild or moderate severity, 1 in 550 of all prescription items contained an error judged to be severe.

SCRIPT is an established web-based eLearning programme for Foundation trainee doctors and dentists in England, online at [www.safeprescriber.org](http://www.safeprescriber.org). In view of the findings from the PRACTICE study, Health Education England's (HEE) West Midlands team commissioned the development of an eLearning programme dedicated to the provision of continuing professional development (CPD) for general practitioners (GPs) relating to prescribing and therapeutics.

## Aim and Objectives

### Aim:

- To develop a web-based eLearning programme for GPs to support CPD relating to prescribing and therapeutics.

### Objectives:

- Develop 24 modules across a wide range of therapeutic areas to reflect practice, managing medicines in the NHS and cost-effective prescribing.
- Create an eLearning platform that GPs can access easily for *just-in-time* learning and revalidation.
- Provide a resource that supports GP CPD and encourages reflective practice.
- Help maintain and develop professional knowledge and competence related to medicines.

## Developing the Resource

- We performed a scoping exercise with key stakeholders to identify a list of module titles and learning outcomes.
- We invited and commissioned a multidisciplinary team of authors to develop content for each module. Authors were provided with a list of learning outcomes.
- New SCRIPT modules were created for GPs. Existing module content was taken from already established SCRIPT variants, such as Paediatric SCRIPT and Foundation SCRIPT, then reviewed and edited for a GP audience.
- The GP SCRIPT modules were then categorised into four key groups (see Figure 1) to aid navigation throughout the eLearning interface.



Figure 1: GP SCRIPT module categories

## The eLearning Modules

The Principles of Prescribing	Prescribing in Special Circumstances
Adherence and Concordance	Dementia Friendly Prescribing
Managing the Medicines Process	Developmental Pharmacology in Paediatrics
Managing the Risks of Prescribing	Practical Prescribing in Paediatrics
Prescription Documentation and Shared Care	Prescribing for Special Patient Groups
Prescribing in Infection	
Utilising the BNF(C)	
The Prescribing Landscape	Prescribing in Medical Emergencies
Therapeutic Groups	Acute Coronary Syndrome
Common Consultations (1)	Anaphylaxis
Common Consultations (2)	Asthma
Gastroenterology	Croup
Infection in Primary Care	Hypoglycaemia
Paediatric Dermatology	Meningitis
Pain Management and End of Life Care	Seizures

Figure 2: GP SCRIPT module titles

The programme will be accessible online at [www.safeprescriber.org](http://www.safeprescriber.org), and available to all GPs in the West Midlands. The module content for the 24 modules (see Figure 2) has been developed to provide an interactive blend of background pharmacological knowledge and patient-centred learning by presenting scenarios that GPs are likely to encounter.

Each module comprises the same core components, commencing with a pre-test of 10 questions, allowing the GP to determine their baseline knowledge on the subject area. The learning starts with a session overview and signposting to references to facilitate progress through the module ('Pre-requisites') and learning outcomes. The GP is then presented with a Case Vignette that will introduce key concepts from the module. The main module content takes 30-40 minutes to complete. Additional activities are presented throughout the module to embed learning.

At the end of the module, the GP is presented with the original pre-test 10 questions (in a random order) and optional further reading. The pre/post-test is intended to help the GP measure subsequent knowledge acquisition on the module subject.

## CPD

The regulations governing the prescribing, administration and supply of medicines are subject to regular review. Furthermore, as new evidence emerges and new medicines are authorised for UK use, guidance on the management of conditions and monitoring of pharmacological treatments can change. Indicators are now routinely employed in GP practice to guide prescribing quality and form part of local incentive schemes for GPs.

Keeping up-to-date with changes in prescribing is therefore essential for patient safety and prescribing quality; it is a legal requirement that doctors undertake CPD<sup>[4]</sup>. Upon completion of a module, a personalised certificate is made available as evidence of CPD.

## Quality Assurance

Robust processes are in place to ensure that all SCRIPT content is kept up-to-date.

All GP SCRIPT modules have been externally peer reviewed, and will also be reviewed by the original author every 2–3 years. This process ensures that the module content is accurate and relevant to current clinical GP practice. The editorial team carry out a daily review in order to continually update SCRIPT content to reflect new guidance and alerts, as they are issued.

The feedback functionality on the SCRIPT website allows users to contact the editorial and technical team with suggestions and comments.



Figure 3: SCRIPT eLearning content from Developmental Pharmacology module

## Monitoring CPD

NHS Trusts, institutions or practices in the region may choose to mandate specific SCRIPT modules.

SCRIPT has a dedicated management site that can be accessed by named individuals (usually managers) to monitor the uptake of modules by certain individual users.

This management function could be used to:

- Support GP trainees and GPs through prescribing and therapeutics CPD.
- Encourage workplace discussion about medicines management and provide a focus for quality improvement projects, audit and appraisals.

## Further Development

Following the anticipated launch of GP SCRIPT in 2017, the eLearning programme will initially be disseminated to GPs in the West Midlands. Evaluation of GP feedback and reaction to GP SCRIPT will be carried out and subsequent adjustments made.

In the long-term we aim for this programme of work to be available nationally.

For further information please contact:

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## References

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