

Australia's first Allied Health Prescribing Program – exploring participants' perspectives on the study program's learning objectives

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BACKGROUND

The Queensland University of Technology in collaboration with Queensland Health pioneered development of the Allied Health Prescribing Training Program to assist allied health professionals (AHPs) to competently prescribe medicines within their scope of practice. The study program consisted of two modules: *Introduction to Clinical Therapeutics for Prescribers* and *Prescribing and Quality Use of Medicines*.

METHODS

Pre- and post- surveys were developed for both modules. Key themes explored were understanding and confidence in selecting therapeutic choices for patients. For module 2 the learning objectives for safe and effective prescribing were investigated. Data were collected from participants in weeks one and thirteen of the modules via online surveys.

RESULTS

In the pre-module survey for the first module, participants had a limited degree of understanding and confidence regarding safe and effective use of medicines and appropriate therapeutic choices for managing patients, particularly for complex patients. This improved significantly in the post-module survey.

In the pre-module survey for module 2, participants had a moderate degree of understanding and confidence regarding various prescribing learning objectives (including safe and effective prescribing, professional, legal and ethical aspects, communicating medication orders, prescribing safely in their select areas of practice, prescribing safely for complex patients in their area of practice). This increased significantly in the post-module survey.

DISCUSSION

This training program was implemented to develop a framework of knowledge and skills for AHPs to undertake a prescribing role. The program delivered an increase in participants' knowledge in the key prescribing areas; and increased participants' confidence in prescribing safely for patients and for complex patients in their select practice areas. An important aspect of this program was inclusion of prescribing-related activities under supervision of a designated medical practitioner. In conclusion, this educational program for Queensland Health AHP prescribers was successfully developed and is in the final stages of delivery.