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Why bother to prescribe in women's health physiotherapy?

S. Gillard

Therapy Services Department, Harrogate District Hospital, Harrogate, UK

Abstract

For over 2 decades, non-medical prescribing has played a significant part in the agenda of the UK Department of Health (DH), with nurses taking the lead role in the National Health Service (NHS). However, since 2005, physiotherapists have been able to train to become supplementary prescribers. In spite of this, only a small number of physiotherapists have become prescribers. In 2009, the DH recommended that work should be carried out to enable physiotherapists to become independent non-medical prescribers. This presentation explores the question of whether prescribing has a role to play in women's health physiotherapy and investigates who benefits from physiotherapists becoming non-medical prescribers. It also asks whether physiotherapists should take on this extra responsibility. To answer these questions, we need to appreciate how non-medical prescribing became legal and identify the opportunities within women's health physiotherapy for non-medical prescribing. An understanding of the differences between the directions for various patient groups, and supplementary and independent prescribing is essential (Fig. 1). All of this needs to be debated against the evidence of the benefits and costs of non-medical prescribing to the patient, the prescriber, the doctor and the NHS.

Keywords: physiotherapy, prescribing, women's health.

Samantha Gillard MSc HPC MCSP is a clinical specialist in women's health physiotherapy. She has over 18 years of experience, and her career has taken her around the UK. Her current post is Lead Physiotherapist in Women's and Men's Health at Harrogate District Hospital.

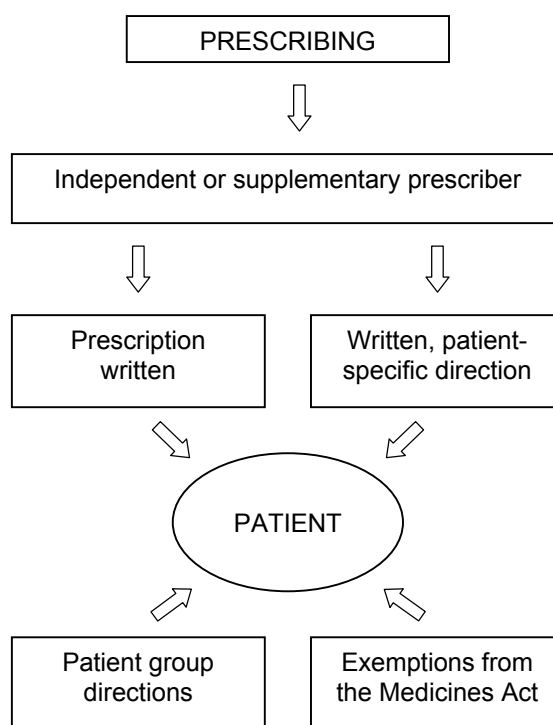


Figure 1. How patients receive their medicines.

Correspondence: Samantha Gillard MSc, Urology Practitioner Physiotherapist, Therapy Services Department, Harrogate District Hospital, Lancaster Park Road, Harrogate, North Yorkshire HG2 7SX, UK (e-mail: samantha.gillard@hdft.nhs.uk).