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978-0-521-72163-9 - Medication Safety: An Essential Guide

Edited by Molly Courtenay and Matt Griffiths

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Preface

Non-medical prescribing is a new area of practice for nurses, pharmacists and allied health professionals (AHPs). Over 30 000 district nurses and health visitors are able to prescribe from the Nurse Prescribers Formulary (NPF) for Community Practitioners. More than 14 000 nurses and 1500 pharmacists across the United Kingdom (UK) have virtually the same independent prescribing rights as doctors. Several hundred AHPs (i.e. physiotherapists, podiatrists, chiropodists and radiologists) and optometrists are able to prescribe in partnership with doctors. These figures are set to rise.

Errors surrounding the prescription, administration and dispensing of medicines by healthcare professionals account for a significant amount of harm and even deaths across the UK. Twenty per cent of all critical incidents in the National Health Service (NHS) are caused by medication errors. These errors cost the NHS as much as it would cost to fund two acute teaching hospitals. The reduction of prescribing errors is now a major Government initiative. This timely and much needed text is designed for all healthcare professionals involved in the management of medicines.

Chapter 1, introduction, provides a general overview of medication safety, the different mechanisms available to healthcare professionals to deliver medicines to patients and actions that can be taken to improve medication safety. Chapters 2 to 4 examine safety in prescribing, safety in dispensing and safety in administering. Adverse drug reactions and drug interactions, interface of care and communication and parenteral drug administration, are explored in Chapters 5 to 7. Chapters 8 to 10 deal with calculations, controlled drugs and patient safety, reporting medication incidents and near misses. The final chapter, Chapter 11, focuses on ensuring safety through evidence-based medicine.

Each chapter is fully referenced and, where appropriate, readers are offered suggestions for further reading and other information sources. We hope that that this book will make a positive contribution to a very important aspect of patient care.

*Molly Courtenay
Matt Griffiths*