**Improving confidence in prescribing through practically focussed teaching**

Dr Andrew Cumpstey, Dr Claire Stockdale, Dr Ravi Patel, Dr Sarah De Courcy, Dr Tom Wright, Dr Patrick Haslam - Unable to present due to weather

**Background:**

Over 86,000 medication errors were reported to the NPSA in 2007.(1) Almost 20% of these were made by Foundation Doctors, even though safe prescribing is a core component of the GMC’s undergraduate curriculum.(2-4) A lack of training is associated with increased rates of prescription errors.(4)

**Methods:**

Current Foundation Trainees delivered a practical prescribing course to 8 final-year medical students, focusing on improving students’ confidence in prescribing. Over 5 weeks, sessions covered Acute Coronary Syndrome, antibiotics, anticoagulation, fluid balance and hyperkalaemia.

Subjective feedback (measuring confidence out of 10 both before and after the session) was collected each week before the course was repeated to 9 different (but similar stage) students.

**Results:**

Overall confidence improved by 4.4 and 3.9 points in Groups 1 and 2 respectively. Confidence improved most in treating hyperkalaemia. Feedback was positive, with students finding the course a useful addition to their other lectures.

**Key Messages:**

* Students still lack confidence in prescribing common medications at the end of the undergraduate courses.
* Many students have not used a BNF or written on a drug chart before sitting their final exams.
* Short courses focussing on the practical aspects of prescribing can significantly increase students’ confidence in common prescriptions.