

# **Evaluation of the Prescribing Skills Assessment implementation, performance and medical student experience in Australia and New Zealand: results from 6440 students from 2017-2019.**

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## **Abstract**

**Background:** Undergraduate medical students globally do not feel confident in their prescribing skills at the point of transition from medical school to clinical practice. Currently assessment of prescribing skills across medical schools in Australia and NZ remains inconsistently assessed.

**Summary of work:** The UK Prescribing Safety Assessment was modified for use in Australia and New Zealand (ANZ) as the Prescribing Skills Assessment (PSA). We investigated the implementation, student performance and acceptability of the ANZ PSA for final-year medical students (2). This study used a mixed-method approach involving student data (n = 6440) for 2017–2019. Data were also aggregated by medical school and included student evaluation survey results. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive and multivariate analyses. The pass rate was established by a modified Angoff method. Thematic analyses of open-ended survey comments were conducted.

**Results:** The average pass rate was slightly higher in 2017 (89%) which used a different examination to 2018 (85%) and 2019 (86%). Little difference was identified between schools for the PSA overall performance or domain sub-scores. Most students provided positive

feedback about the PSA regarding the interface and clarity of questions, but an average of 35% reported insufficient time for completion. Further, 70% on average felt unprepared by their school curricula for the PSA, which is in part explained by the low prescribing experience; 69% reported completing  $\leq 10$  prescriptions during training.

Conclusions: The ANZ PSA was associated with high pass rates and acceptability, although student preparedness was highlighted as a concern for further investigation.

Takeaway points.

- The PSA is currently used by half of all medical schools (and growing) and >5000 students participating in 2021.
- This study demonstrates the collaborative process for regionalising an accepted assessment method for prescribing skill competence.
- This study highlights student recommendations for developing educational strategies to prepare students more completely for prescribing.

### References (maximum three)

1. Simon R. J. Maxwell, Jamie J. Coleman, Lynne Bollington, Celia Taylor, David J. Webb (2017) Prescribing Safety Assessment 2016: Delivery of a national prescribing assessment to 7343 UK final-year medical students *British Journal of Clinical Pharmacology* 83 (10): 2249 – 2258 <https://doi.org/10.1111/bcp.13319>
2. Paul K. L. Chin, Kellie Charles et al (2023): Evaluation of the Prescribing Skills Assessment implementation, performance and medical student experience in Australia and New Zealand. *British Journal of Clinical Pharmacology* (in press, 05 June 2023), <https://doi.org/10.1111/bcp.15814>