Nurse prescriber–patient consultations: a case study in dermatology

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Background

- 74% of nurses prescribe for patients with dermatological conditions.
- Nurse-led care is integral to service provision.
- Nurse prescribing is thought to enhance holistic care.
- Lack of research specific to nurse prescribing in dermatology.
Aim

To explore the consultations between nurse prescribers and dermatology patients
Research Design and Methods

Collective Case Study Design

10 case sites across England

Multiple methods
- Semi-structured interviews
- Videotaped patient consultations
- Self-administered questionnaires
Data

**Semi-structured interviews** (n=40)
- 11 Nurse prescribers
- 12 Doctors
- 11 Admin/Receptionists
- 6 Non-prescribing nurses

**Videotaped nurse consultations** (n=40)

**Patient questionnaires** (n=165)

Data collection: June 2006 – September 2007
Analysis:

- Thematic analysis
- Descriptive statistics & non-parametric tests
- Data triangulation

Findings:

Access
Continuity
Flexibility
Communication
Access

- Prescribing reported to improve efficient running of service
- The majority of patients rated access as very good or excellent
- Significant differences in appointment patterns
Continuity

- Continuity was thought to improve quality of care:

  “I can now sit with people I have looked after a long time that have probably come up to now using systemic therapy and I know the patient because I have seen them regularly and we can discuss in great detail. The consultation is quite professional and much more advanced than it used to be” (cs3NP)
Continuity (cont…)

- The majority of patients rated continuity highly
- Better continuity for specialist nurses
Flexibility

- Nurses more flexible consultation length than doctors
- The majority (78%) of patients rated the amount of time spent with the nurse as very good/excellent
- Low waiting times
Communication

Good rapport with patients

“The nurse can be more sympathetic, more supportive ... a supportive role sounds a bit more demeaning, but it is really important.” (cs2Dr)

“When people come to see the nurse they feel she is more approachable and she gets on really well with them.” (Admin)
Practice setting

- Specialist nurses reported more benefits from prescribing

“I like to make the decisions with the patients. So we do a lot of working through the products to find the one that they like, and the one that they are going to use, and the one that works. I’m prepared to do that work with them, whereas maybe a doctor wouldn’t necessarily. I think that really helps because it definitely reduces the problems with the eczemas if you get them on a regime that they like.” (cs5NP)
Patient Questionnaire

Communication: % of patients assigning ratings of 'excellent' or 'very good'

- How thoroughly asked about symptoms/how feeling: 84.2%
- How well nurse listened: 92.1%
- How well at ease during physical: 91.7%
- How much involved in decisions about your care: 87.7%
- How well nurse explained probs/treatment: 93.2%
- Amount of info about medicine(s): 83.4%
- Amount of info about dealing with problem: 87%
- Amount of time nurse spent with you: 85.9%
- Nurse's patience with questions/worries: 86.1%
- Nurses caring /concern for you: 91.5%
Video-consultation results

Assessment of Communication

- Listening and understanding
- Sensitive to patient concerns
- Gives clear instructions
- Identifies & plans for future needs
- Explains condition, risks & benefits
- Helps patient make informed choice
- Instructs on side effects

Yes  No  N/A  Disagree
Conclusions

- Nurses demonstrate good communication skills
- Good communication was considered to improve the appropriateness of prescribing decisions and quality of care for dermatology patients
- Inconsistent evidence of discussing side effects and encouraging shared decision-making
- Differences between practice settings
Any questions?