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Nurse prescribing in Poland: Opinions expressed by doctors, nurses and patients receiving primary care

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The Act of 22 July 2014, amending the Nurses and Midwives Act, permits individuals performing these professions to prescribe medication in Poland as of 2016. Experience of numerous countries worldwide shows both a great need for introducing the above competences and benefits resulting from expanding nurses' rights. To identify and examine the differences in opinions held by health care professionals and the general public concerning the right to administer and prescribe medication which has been awarded to nurses and midwives in Poland. The study was conducted from 1st December 2014 to 1st July 2015, in randomly selected primary health care clinics, among 2,227 individuals, including 849 subjects representing medical personnel of primary health care and 1,378 patients receiving primary care services. The study employed 2 versions of a questionnaire. The data were processed with the use of analytic software package STATISTICA 11.0. The relationships were examined with Chi-square test for independence and Kruskal-Wallis test. The findings showed that the health professionals do not believe the new rights awarded to nurses and midwives will reduce the waiting time for medical consultations ($p < 0.001$). Nurses' qualifications for the new tasks were most highly rated by patients, while the least favourable opinion was expressed by doctors ($p < 0.001$) who also most frequently emphasized the obligatory requirement for nurses to complete second-degree university course and acquire professional specialization (49.5%). Majority of the health professionals and patients agree it is necessary for nurses and midwives to be able to legally issue prescriptions, including renewed prescriptions, for selected medications and specified medical products. To introduce nurse prescribing it is necessary to develop a suitable strategy enabling implementation of the government's initiative and facilitating the process of taking up the new task by nurses. The statutory assignment of new responsibilities to nurses will not improve effectiveness of medical care, despite the public approval for nurse prescribing of medication, selected medical products and foods for special medical purposes.

Biography

Paweł Więch is a Doctor of Health Sciences and a Specialist of Emergency Nursing. He works at the Nursing and Health Sciences Institute at the Faculty of Medicine, the University of Rzeszow. Between 2007 and 2012 he was gaining experience while working on Intensive Care Unit at Clinical Hospital in Rzeszow. He has published more than twenty articles in reputed journals.

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