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Introduction

Hasty and uncritical adoption of new drugs can lead to adverse consequences for patients. GPs face an ongoing challenge in identifying what new drugs offer a real therapeutic advantage over existing therapies.

Background

- NPS is an established provider of education and resources to support GPs' skills in assessing new drugs. Workshop and seminar series have been the main formats used.
- Online learning was proposed as an effective way of providing more GPs with support for assessing new drugs. The online platform would allow a case-based format and access to web resources and tools.
- A small group meeting program with related content was considered an option for GPs who prefer face-to-face learning.

Aim

To design an online learning program for GPs and a complementary small group meeting program to address specific gaps in skills and knowledge that hinder evidence-based decisions about new drugs.

Methods

Planning

Content for the programs was guided by:

- evaluation of previous *Evidence vs Hype* workshops
- gaps in skills and knowledge identified in GP practice research (see Box 1)
- principles of teaching and applying evidence-based practice
- QUM principles and the WHO Guide to Good Prescribing.

The content was split into 6 topics to match key steps in evidence-based decision making. The program was designed to meet Active Learning Module (RACGP QA & CPD) criteria.

Process

- Content development was iterative with multiple cycles of review. The process included: review by a small team of experts, in-house usability testing, and piloting with four GPs (see Fig 1).
- We named the programs *Finding Evidence — Recognising Hype* and made the small group meeting program available in July 2009 and the online learning program live in November 2009.

Box 1. Gaps in new drug assessment skills

Sources of information GPs use

- Pharmaceutical industry and opinion-based sources are rated more often as influences than evidence-based sources^{1,2}

Barriers to using evidence-based sources

- time constraints
- conflict with patient's expectations
- not knowing where to look³⁻⁵

Other gaps in GPs skills or knowledge

- critical appraisal skills⁵
- communicating benefits and risks to patients⁶

Evaluation

- The online program will be evaluated using de-identified paired pre and post questionnaires to gauge impact on knowledge.
- Feedback to date suggests the program is meeting learners' needs.

"A highly recommended activity, extremely useful and relevant to medical practice, have widely disseminated the same to my GP colleagues. Well Done, NPS."
Online learner

- The programs will be available until mid December 2010, with full evaluation planned for early 2011.

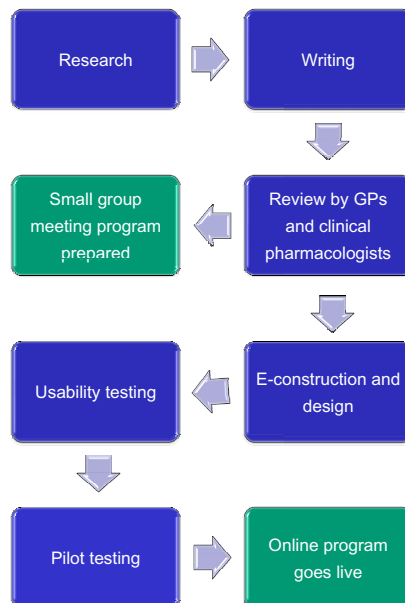


Figure 1. Stages of development

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Strategies

We included tools that addressed knowledge gaps and could also be used in clinical practice (see Fig 2). We used a variety of educational strategies to enhance learning and relevance to practice (see Fig 3).

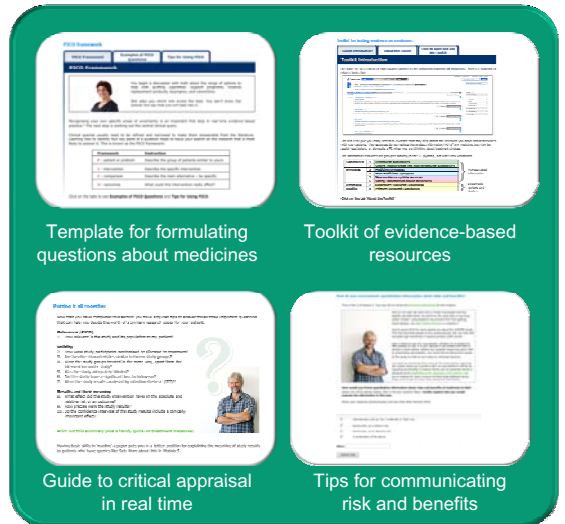


Figure 2. Tools for evidence-based prescribing



Figure 3. Educational strategies

Conclusions

- The *Finding Evidence — Recognising Hype* programs were developed to address some of the common barriers to making informed decisions about new drugs.
- Development was a multi-stage process, involving a wide range of background materials, resources, and expertise.

References

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