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A literature review of the training offered to qualified prescribers to use electronic prescribing systems

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1							
2	А	literature review of the training offered to qualified prescribers to use					
3		electronic prescribing systems: Why is it so important?					
4							
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- 47 Abstract
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Objectives: A key element of the implementation and on-going use of an electronic 49 50 prescribing (ePrescribing) system is ensuring that users are, and remain, sufficiently 51 trained to use the system. Studies have suggested that insufficient training is 52 associated with suboptimal use. However, it is not clear from these studies how 53 clinicians are trained to use ePrescribing systems or the effectiveness of different 54 approaches. We sought to describe the various approaches used to train qualified 55 prescribers on ePrescribing systems and to identify whether users were educated 56 about the pitfalls and challenges of using these systems.

58 Methods: We performed a literature review, using a systematic approach across three 59 large databases: Cumulative Index Nursing and Allied Health Literature (CINAHL), 60 Embase and Medline were searched for relevant English language articles. Articles 61 that explored the training of qualified prescribers on ePrescribing systems in a 62 hospital setting were included.

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Key Findings: Our search of 'all training' approaches returned 1,155 publications, of 64 65 which seven were included. A separate search of 'online' training found three relevant 66 publications. Training methods in the 'all training' category included clinical scenarios, demonstrations and assessments. Regarding 'online' training approaches; a 67 team at the University of Victoria in Canada developed a portal containing simulated 68 69 versions of electronic health records, where individuals could prescribe for fictitious patients. Educating prescribers about the challenges and pitfalls of electronic systems 70 71 was rarely discussed.

Conclusions: A number of methods are used to train prescribers; however the lack of papers retrieved suggests a need for additional studies to inform training methods. **INTRODUCTION** Electronic Prescribing (ePrescribing) systems have been associated with a range of potential benefits over paper-based systems, particularly when implemented with clinical decision support (CDS).(1-4) Benefits, including improved patient outcomes, safer patient care and potential cost savings from improved formulary management, by prompting clinicians to prescribe generic rather than branded medications,(5) has meant that the number of ePrescribing systems (home grown and

96 commercial), implemented across a diverse range of settings is growing. The

97 implementation of these systems in United Kingdom (U.K.) hospitals has surged and 98 is expected to continue increasing partly due, to the financial incentives offered such as the National Health Service's (NHS) Integrated Digital Care Fund, the Safer 99 100 Hospitals Safer Wards Fund and the recent government recommendations to 101 encourage increased productivity.(6-8) Similar increases in the use of healthcare 102 technology have also been seen in the United States, where the use of computerized 103 provider order entry (CPOE) systems has more than tripled since 2010.(9) This has 104 been largely driven by The Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical 105 Health (HITECH) Act, which offered financial incentives to organisations that could 106 demonstrate 'meaningful use' of Electronic Health Records (EHRs).(10) Australian 107 government incentives, have also been associated with increased uptake of 108 computerised prescribing in primary care.(11)

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109 A key element of the implementation and on-going use of an ePrescribing system is ensuring that users are, and remain, sufficiently trained and competent to 110 111 use the system effectively. The user training should be comprehensive enough to 112 cover all aspects of how a user may need to interact with a system to undertake their role, but also highlight potential pitfalls and challenges that they may encounter. 113 Organisations can learn from those who have experienced the implementation process 114 115 about what 'went well' and 'not so well'. Ash et al. stressed the importance of 116 educating clinicians about the unintended consequences of ePrescribing systems, so that clinicians do not fall into the trap of over reliance on technology, and risk patient 117 harm.(12) The number of different professionals (e.g. nurse or pharmacists) who can 118 119 prescribe is also expanding, thus the training provided needs to accommodate users' varying backgrounds and roles. These systems are continuously evolving and offer an 120 121 ever increasing range of new features thus it is important to not only consider

introductory training but also the approaches used to inform existing staff about
system changes. Training is not sufficient to overcome poor design, but vendors
should be incentivised to develop systems using user-centred design principles.

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125 Organisations face challenges in delivering effective training including: large numbers of staff; staff resistance/availability to attend training; rotation between 126 wards and specialties; and temporary/short term staff. Little evidence has been 127 128 published on the training strategies used to familiarise staff with these systems, many 129 of which change following implementation through local customisation and system 130 upgrades. Online training strategies have been utilised in medical education and can offer a potentially convenient and efficient way of training large numbers of 131 practitioners;(13) however, the effectiveness of this approach for users of ePrescribing 132 133 systems is not clear.

134 Some studies suggest that insufficient training is associated with suboptimal use of a system. (14, 15) Baysari et al. found that large numbers of CDS alerts were 135 136 generated by the improper use of the system, leading to the production of 'technically preventable' alerts.(14) Additionally, high override rates of CDS alerts have been 137 reported.(16) Her et al. found that almost 1 in 5 non-formulary medication alerts were 138 inappropriately overridden, thus reducing the potential for cost savings.(5) Shulman et 139 140 al. also found that the rate of errors made when using an ePrescribing system, 141 decreased over time, demonstrating a learning curve that had taken place.(17) Such studies highlight the pitfalls of these systems and the importance of training and 142 education both in facilitating successful implementation of electronic systems and 143 144 averting errors. Furthermore, although there are fundamental differences between the provision of healthcare services between clinical settings and countries, there are key 145

elements of the prescribing process that all prescribers must perform, such as theselection of a drug dose and frequency.

We conducted a literature review to describe the approaches used to train qualified prescribers on ePrescribing systems in a hospital setting. We were also interested in knowing whether online training approaches were used and whether training covered the pitfalls and challenges of using these systems.

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153 METHODS

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155 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

156 Articles that explored the training of qualified prescribers (including medical and non-medical practitioners) on ePrescribing systems in a hospital setting were 157 included. We chose to focus on the training of qualified and practicing prescribers due 158 to the specific challenges associated with training large groups of busy clinicians, 159 which can be different to the challenges faced with training undergraduate students in 160 a more 'relaxed' environment. We were interested in the types of training approaches 161 used, the relative effectiveness of any specific approach (if discussed), and any 162 challenges encountered. Studies that explored training of undergraduate medical 163 164 students, training of clinical skills other than prescribing, or the use of ePrescribing or EHRs in medical education (e.g., to enable students to monitor patient progress) were 165 excluded (Appendix 1 and 2). Studies did not need to include a comparator group, as 166 167 this may have presented practical and ethical challenges to carrying out the study in a hospital population. 168

Search Strategy and Study Selection

171 Three large databases were searched including: Cumulative Index Nursing and 172 Allied Health Literature (CINAHL), Embase (OVID), and Medline (OVID). The search terms used are listed in Table 1. Sets of search terms employed included 173 "Electronic Prescribing" OR "Computerized Provider Order Entry" in Set 1; and 174 "Clinical Decision Support" OR "Decision Support System" in Set 2; and "Electronic 175 176 Medical Record" in Set 3; and "Education Clinical" OR "Medical Education" in Set 4; and "Education Distance" in Set 5; and "Prescribing" in Set 6 (Table 1). These sets 177 178 were combined and our full search strategy for one database can be accessed in appendix 3. The search was performed on the 15th May 2015. Only papers published 179 in English were considered. A separate search, which included 'electronic 180 prescribing' and 'online training', was also conducted. We did not restrict the 181 timeframe for these searches. In addition, we searched the websites of vendors of 182 183 electronic prescribing systems supplied in the U.K for suggested training approaches. We included all publication types (including editorials and opinion pieces). 184

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186 Data Extraction and Synthesis

All duplicate articles were removed. Titles and abstracts were initially reviewed followed by the full text by one author (CLB) and any queries were discussed with a further reviewer (SPS), if necessary. Reference lists were also examined for additional papers. Data were abstracted onto a customised data extraction sheet by one author (CLB), which included variables such as: title of the study; country of origin; decision to include and justification for the choice. A narrative synthesis of all eligible studies was undertaken. Papers were read and re-

read, and key recurring themes and sub-themes were identified iteratively from the data. In keeping with the aim of this review, we focused on the types of training approaches used to train qualified prescribers in the hospital setting and the challenges associated with training.

- 198
- 199 **RESULTS**
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The search for 'all training' returned a total of 1,155 publications; after 201 202 reviewing titles, abstracts and full texts, a total of 1,149 were excluded (Figure 1). After reviewing the reference lists of the remaining publications, one further article 203 204 was included. A total of seven articles were included, comprising of three full text 205 publications from the US,(18-20) and two from Canada.(20, 21) The remaining two articles were conference abstracts, one from the UK (22) and one from 206 Pakistan/Tanzania.(23) Further detail about the range of study types can be obtained 207 208 in Appendices 1 and 2. The authors of the conference abstracts were contacted and asked for additional information, including (i) the type of training delivered and 209 210 whether online training methods were used (if unclear from the publication), (ii) whether a competence assessment was used, and (iii) whether the training was 211 212 developed internally or by the vendor. We obtained responses from all authors apart 213 from one.(23) We decided to include the two studies by Borycki et al. and Kushniruk et al., as there was potential for these training methods to be used for practicing 214 prescribers.(20, 21) 215

The separate search for the use of 'online' training methods returned 25 publications. After reviewing the titles, abstracts and full text, three relevant articles were identified (Figure 2), two of which were previously identified and included in

the search of "all training" approaches. The additional article found in this separate'online' search(24) was included making eight publications in total.

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222 Traditional training approaches

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Typically, a variety of training methods were used such as classroom-based 224 sessions, which included 'run through' demonstrations and practical exercises, as well 225 226 as face-to-face or ward-based training facilitated by 'super-users' (expert staff 227 members that have received additional training). Super-users were found to play a valuable role in providing ward-level support and reduce the need for costly external 228 229 training.(25) Tools such as e-learning packages, quick reference guides, for example a 230 list for keyboard short cuts and 'how to' guides, were also provided.(18, 22) Three 231 studies used traditional classroom-based learning to train users; one on a paediatric intensive care unit,(22) another across an integrated delivery system(18), and a third 232 233 study conducted at two United States (U.S.) hospitals.(25) Users were given an overview of the specific features of their system, using a combination of 234 235 demonstrations, lectures and practical exercises, thus allowing the users to gain 'hands-on' experience of using the system.(18, 22) In particular Bredfeldt et al. 236 encouraged staff to customise their own live version of the EHR by, for example, 237 238 creating preference lists, thus allowing users to experience the benefits of this functionality immediately.(18) Ensuring clinicians have ample opportunities to attend 239 training was important, so weekend and out-of-hour sessions were organised in one 240 241 study.(25)

In terms of user evaluation, formal assessments, quizzes and feedback methods were utilized in three studies.(18, 22, 23) Bredfeldt et al. evaluated post-

244 training performance of two skills (covered during the training session) to measure the effect of training.(18) Classroom-based training and 'hands-on' activities were 245 found to have been associated with improved utility of certain functions.(18) 246 247 However, users would have appreciated more opportunities to receive training on the 'live' system and felt that the range of topics covered should be broader.(18) 248 249 Bredfeldt et al. also sent e-mails to users to report their usage of specific features and 250 compared their activity with that of their peers, serving to remind users of the learning 251 material and track their progress.(18)

252

253 Online training approaches

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255 Web-based demonstrations were used in only one study.(23) Three papers describe the work of one team, which have developed an online portal, which housed 256 a range of simulated versions of different EHRs containing electronic prescribing 257 258 functionality. Healthcare professional students, practicing professionals and healthcare informaticians were given access to this portal where they could prescribe 259 260 for fictitious patients in a safe environment. (20, 21, 24) The portal also provided an opportunity for users to learn about the design of different systems that influence 261 clinical practice.(20, 21, 24) 262

Evaluation of online training methods was limited. Experiences and lessons learned from the University of Victoria's EHR portal appeared to be positive, with users perceiving the experience as valuable and having a greater understanding of how EHR systems were to be used in practice.(20) Ayoub et al. did not specify how quizzes were developed or which areas were assessed; although trainees reportedly scored highly in these.(23) Jimenez highlighted the importance of providing timely

269 feedback to users after completing exercises.(19)

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271 Clinical scenarios and exercises

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Two studies described using targeted clinical scenarios that focused on 273 274 particular problem areas to train staff. Foster et al. developed exercises based on commonly encountered prescribing errors, such as the prescribing of Tazocin[®] 275 276 (piperacillin-tazobactam, an antibacterial) at non-standard times.(22) Bredfeldt et al. 277 targeted training to specific clinical areas, such as pre-operative patient visits, where there had been a number of support requests from existing users.(18) Developing 278 expertise-specific scenarios relevant to clinicians from different specialist areas was 279 considered important.(19, 24) 280

281

282 DISCUSSION

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284 The papers identified a range of approaches used to train qualified prescribers, 285 including the use of 'traditional' training, online training, and clinical scenarios and exercises. The use of a range of different approaches may appeal to individual 286 learning styles, with users appreciative of relevant and tailored clinical-scenarios in 287 particular. We chose to search for published studies in three large databases. 288 However, it is possible that studies may have been published in other databases or 289 290 unpublished work (e.g., reports or working papers) may exist in the grey literature. We only focused on the training of qualified prescribers due to the specific 291 requirements of their training. However, we are conscious that some training 292 approaches used for other groups, such as undergraduate students, may have been 293

potentially applicable and possibly useful. We also acknowledge that only one
researcher (CLB) conducted the data extraction and no quality assessment of the
included studies was undertaken. Notwithstanding these limitations, it is clear that
there is a lack of published research in this area, which needs to be addressed;
organisations should also share any lessons learnt from their experiences of training
prescribers during the implementation stage and after continued use of ePrescribing
systems to fill the knowledge gap.(26)

301 The papers identified outlined a number of methods used to train qualified 302 prescribers, including classroom-based sessions,(18, 22, 25) demonstrations and 'hands-on' exercises. Some studies incorporated assessment, which allowed users to 303 304 track their own progress and informed senior staff about those who may need further 305 assistance.(18, 22, 23) Clinical scenarios aimed at addressing commonly encountered 306 prescribing errors or frequent technical support requests were also used.(18, 22) Such problem areas may reveal systems flaws that may contribute to the occurrence of 307 308 errors or poor usability. For instance, although ePrescribing can decrease prescribing of 'non-formulary medicines',(27) formulary alerts are often inappropriately 309 310 overridden.(5) Therefore, understanding how users interact with these systems is important for the development of informed training strategies. 311

This review found that combinations of different learning methods were used, which appealed to the learning styles of different users. For example, Ross and Banchy used a combination of one-to-one and group classroom-training sessions to address the specific needs of medical staff and maximise attendance.(25) Evidence of this was also apparent when training staff on other non-ePrescribing forms of healthcare-information systems. For instance, McCain et al. reported how challenging it was to get nurse and physician users to attend classroom-based training sessions on

319 an EHR system (as opposed to an electronic prescribing system) due to other clinical commitments. Users felt that these sessions failed to address their learning needs by 320 either being too simplistic or too advanced. This resulted in a blended learning 321 322 strategy being adopted that included a combination of computer-based learning exercises and a training CD, which facilitated 'self-study' where users could train at a 323 convenient time and pace.(28) Clearly, this approach may be beneficial when training 324 325 prescribers on ePrescribing systems. Therefore, due to the heavy workloads and often 326 unpredictable schedules of prescribers, it would seem reasonable to suggest a training 327 approach that allows users to train at their own pace and convenience. Laramee et al. found that participants preferred written guidance on how to perform tasks rather than 328 329 computer 'help' functions. Organisations should therefore consider providing a range 330 of learning tools to meet users' needs.(28-30) Notably, we found a relatively small 331 number of studies, which have been conducted either on one particular ward or organisation, thus may not be generalisable to other settings. The workforce in rural 332 333 or remote locations for instance, may lack sufficient resources to hire healthcare informatics staff who are important for the deployment and ongoing support of 334 ePrescribing systems, therefore more targeted and accessible approaches such as 335 checklists and toolkits may be useful.(10) 336

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It is likely that other training methods employed in practice are not discussed in the small number of articles found in this review. Suppliers of ePrescribing systems may provide a range of training options, such as workshops or e-learning; however these are typically focused towards key internal staff who will disseminate training to others or are primarily delivered during the implementation phase, rather than during the later stages when the systems are embedding (on-going support).

The use of e-learning as a method of training clinicians on an ePrescribing 343 system was considered important in the included studies.(18, 19) A study, which 344 delivered educational material primarily to nurses via an e-learning tutorial, was 345 346 associated with high completion rates of the training module (74% of the 2,080 nurses) and perceived improvements in the completeness of documentation within the 347 EHR, thus supporting this approach.(31) The American Health Information 348 349 Management Association (AHIMA) and the American Medical Informatics 350 Association (AMIA) developed recommendations related to workforce issues during 351 EHR implementation and suggested that a range of innovative learning techniques, including electronic-methods, should be used.(26) E-learning material should be 352 353 engaging, potentially including interactive scenarios, simple and concise, clearly 354 specify learning outcomes, and take care to limit the amount of information 355 presented.(31) With organisations choosing to migrate from one system to another (e.g., Brigham and Women's hospital in Boston recently transitioned from a home-356 357 grown system to a commercial system), and clinicians often rotating between sites (e.g., between a tertiary care and a community hospital) or specialities (e.g., between 358 359 a medical and a surgical rotation), it is important that users feel able to carry out their key tasks on different systems. Tools such as the University of Victoria's EHR portal 360 361 that provided users with an opportunity to train on a range of systems may be 362 particularly useful. These 'virtual learning environments' should replicate as much as possible the interoperability issues associated with using multiple systems (e.g. failure 363 to integrate allergy information from the EHR into the ePrescribing software)(32) so 364 365 that prescribers are prepared for these challenges. The importance of intra-system interoperability, and the need to improve the transfer and use of information between 366 367 systems is well-recognised in the literature.(33, 34)

368 Training specifically aimed towards educating prescribers about the challenges and pitfalls of ePrescribing was rarely discussed. However, studies 369 frequently include education and training as a solution to some of "the issues" 370 371 encountered, or as an explanation for why users fail to use the system as intended.(14, 35-37) Sittig et al. made specific recommendations, such as, providing adequate 372 373 training opportunities for clinicians to experience the system before implementation, potentially enforcing a minimum level of training before use of the system is 374 375 authorised. They also proposed that organisations deliver 'walk-throughs' of the 376 different processes for specific clinical staff.(36) This supports the studies by Foster et al. and Bredfeldt et al, which highlight the need to tailor the clinical scenarios and 377 378 content of training to the role, expertise and tasks performed by the user.(18, 22, 38, 379 39) Training approaches should encompass both procedural tasks (e.g., prescribing) and cognitive tasks (e.g., interpreting CDS alerts) so that prescribers realise the full 380 potential of the system.(38) Importantly, prescribers should be able to identify and 381 382 address gaps in their own knowledge; (26) learning outcomes can provide a benchmark for users to judge themselves against.(40) Alongside training, it is 383 important for system developers to improve the design and usability of ePrescribing 384 and CDS systems. Increasing CDS alert specificity and sensitivity to produce more 385 'patient-centred' recommendations is likely to reduce the impact of alert-fatigue and 386 387 improve patient outcomes.(41, 42) Implementation is costly,(3) therefore the effect of interventions, should be evaluated to inform practice. 388

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390 CONCLUSION

392	Organisations are currently using a range of learning methods to train
393	qualified prescribers to use electronic systems. Online learning may facilitate the
394	training for many users. However, the lack of papers retrieved suggests a need for
395	additional studies to inform training and assessment methods. Finally, further research
396	should explore the best way of training users about the pitfalls and challenges
397	associated with electronic systems.
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- 534 Table 1: Search Terms

Set 1	Set 2	Set 3	Set 4	Set 5	Set 6
(Electronic	(Clinical	(Electronic	(Education	(Education	(Prescriber
Prescribing)	Decision	Medical	Clinical)	Distance)	(Included in
	Support)	Record)			Embase Search
					Only))
Computerized	Clinical	Electronic	Education	Education	Prescribed
prescriber order	decision	medical	Clinical	Distance	Prescribing
entry	support	record/	education	Distance	Prescription
Computerized	Decision	Electronic	Training	learning	
provider order	support	health record	Course	Educational	
entry	system	Electronic	Competence	non-	
Electronic	CDS	patient record	Medical	traditional	
physician order	Drug		education	(CINAHL	
entry	therapy,		Clinical	only)	
Electronic order	computer		competence		
entry	assisted		Competence		
Electronic			assessment		
prescribing			Prescriber		
Electronic			training		
prescription			Prescriber		
Computerized			assessment		
physician order					
entry					
CPOE					
Computerized					
order entry					
Medical order					
entry systems					