

Prescribing Ethics



Reading time:

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Dr Z received correspondence from Ahpra threatening immediate action to suspend registration due to public safety concerns. Ahpra had received complaints from a few of Dr Z's colleagues and a community pharmacist, alleging inappropriate prescribing practices. The complaints focused on high individual doses of S8s and prescribing without a proper basis.

After contacting MIPS

Upon review it was observed that the notifications that were being relied upon were not sufficiently consistent or robust. Whilst Dr Z's prescribing may have been in higher doses or frequency than normal, it was not entirely contraindicated for the patients he treated.

MIPS prepared submissions to Ahpra on behalf of Dr Z and accompanied Dr Z when he appeared before the Board. The immediate action did not proceed, but Ahpra commenced a detailed investigation. After nearly 2 years of investigations and evidence gathering, it was found that there was insufficient evidence to criticise or restrict Dr Z's prescribing. Dr Z was cleared of all allegations against him. All legal fees for this case were paid by MIPS.

Key messages

- Ensure your prescribing is therapeutically indicated, in appropriate dosage and has the appropriate authority (where required).
- Do not unnecessarily expose patients to adverse side effects.
- Maintain adequate patient notes to support decisions made. This means taking a proper, look at all possibilities and deciding any change in management of a patient's condition. Avoid complacency, if you have to have a hard discussion with the patient over no longer prescribing S8's then have the discussion and communicate with the patient.
- Such investigations can run for long periods and be stressful. Seek advice and trust MIPS to assist.
- MIPS will work with the practitioner to try and achieve the best result that allows the practitioner to continue practising where possible.

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