



Do prescribing psychologists have enough medical training to prescribe?

- The Department of Defense (DoD) Psychopharmacology Demonstration Project (PDP, 1991) began by requiring a curriculum that resembled medical school, but concluded that medical school is not necessary to prescribe.
 - Participants in the DoD PDP were universally acknowledged as medically safe providers, judged as “performing with excellence” by evaluators that included physicians and psychiatrists.
- Curriculum guidelines were established by the American Psychological Association’s model curriculum (1996). Prescribers must have a PhD or PsyD in psychology and obtain coursework and practical experience for the Masters Degree in Clinical Psychopharmacology (MSCP). Such coursework includes physiology, pathophysiology, neurology, neuropathology, pharmacology/psychopharmacology, lab test interpretation, and detecting medical disorders.

*The answer is YES based on 20+ years of performance of
prescribing psychologists in states that allow prescriptive authority.*

- Review of research from large, robust, epidemiologic studies in states with RxP have concluded:
 - ***Suicides are reduced in states with RxP.^{1,2}***
 - ***Access is increased, including in vulnerable populations.³***
 - ***Safety has been established.⁴***
 - ***Prescribing psychologists practice in a similar manner to psychiatrists, with the exception of less polypharmacy. Prescribing psychologists more often REDUCE medication use.⁵***
- In Texas, medical school training is not required for all prescribers, such as dentists, optometrists, and podiatrists.

The evidence is clear: Prescribing psychologists are safe and effective prescribers who *increase* access to care.

It’s time for TX to get on board RxP!

References

¹ Choudhury, A.R., Plemmons, A. *Effects of giving psychologists prescriptive authority: Evidence from a natural experiment in the United States.* *Health Policy.* <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.healthpol.2023.104846>

² Hughes PM, McGrath RE, Thomas KC. *Evaluating the impact of prescriptive authority for psychologists on the rate of deaths attributed to mental illness.* *Res Soc Adm Pharm* 2023; 19: 667–672. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sapharm.2022.12.006>

³ Chang, R. (2024). *Summary of the prescribing psychologist practice survey.* State Psychologist Association New Mexico. <https://www.spanewmexico.org/rxp-practice-survey>.

⁴ General Accounting Office, “Prescribing Psychologists: DOD Demonstration Participants Perform Well but Have Little Effect on Readiness or Costs,” Health, Education and Human Services Division, June 1999.

⁵ Kylin Peck, Robert McGrath, and Bryan Holbrook, “Practices of Psychologists: Replication and Extension,” *Professional Psychology Research and Practice* 52, no. 3 (October 2020): 195–201.

Additional Supporting Studies

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