Ensuring Fitness to Practice: the modernisation of health professional regulation

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Ensuring Fitness to Practice: Key Players and Responsibilities

Regulator
- responsible for standards of education and practice

Educator
- prime responsibility in providing learning to achieve initial "fitness to practice"

Employer
- responsible for ensuring that health professional employees maintain fitness to practice

Professional Body
- supports regulatory processes for ensuring fitness to practice, e.g. accreditation, credentialing

Issues in Initial “Fitness to Practice” (FtP)

Regulatory requirements
Options include:
- national vocational qualification
- academic qualification
- supervised practice
- professional qualification
- competency framework

Key perspectives and practicalities
- Who provides learning?
- Who accredits learning provision and institutions?
- Who assesses competency and how?

Issues in Maintaining “Fitness to Practice” (FtP)

Approaches
- annual appraisal
- absence of complaints/concerns relating to performance, conduct and health
- summative assessment of competency

Who needs to do what?
- individual health practitioner
- employer
- professional body
- regulator

N.B. mechanisms are needed to support/retrain/rehabilitate those who fail to maintain FtP

Coherence in Health Professional Regulation

Intra-disciplinary regulation
- to achieve efficient skill-mix, need to regulate specialists and “paraprofessionals” within disciplinary family

Inter-disciplinary regulation
- need to harmonise standards for “restricted acts” undertaken by more than one discipline, e.g. prescribing

Integrated systems of regulation
- e.g. reducing adverse drug events
Reducing adverse drug events:
Safe products, safe systems, safe professionals

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