

**Provision of medication for emergency contraception  
17HDC01194, 19 June 2019**

*Registered nurse ~ Medical centre ~  
Emergency contraception ~ Documentation ~ Right 4(2)*

A woman attended a medical centre to request the emergency contraceptive pill (ECP) following unprotected sexual intercourse two days earlier. The woman was seen by a registered nurse.

The woman's recollection of the appointment was very different to that of the nurse. The woman said that she went to the medical centre only for the ECP. The nurse recalled that the woman had various complaints, and that she was concerned that the woman's symptoms indicated a possible urinary tract infection (UTI) or sexually transmitted infection.

The following day, the nurse retrospectively completed her nursing notes, but did not document the medications she had given. The nurse completed a standing order template for azithromycin, an antibiotic used to treat chlamydia. She did not complete standing order templates for either trimethoprim or Postinor.

The woman returned to the medical centre a few weeks later. A pregnancy test undertaken that day revealed that she was pregnant.

**Findings**

Due to the conflicting accounts and the incorrect and incomplete clinical notes, it was not possible to determine exactly what occurred during the woman's consultation with the nurse. However, the lack of clinical documentation was criticised, particularly with respect to the recording of the medications dispensed and the failure to adhere to the medical centre's standing order protocol. Consequently, the nurse was found to have breached Right 4(2).

It was held that the errors made by the nurse were not a result of a lack of training or a lack of adequate policies or guidelines. The medical centre was therefore found not to have breached the Code.

**Recommendations**

The nurse provided a written letter of apology to the woman. It was recommended that the Nursing Council of New Zealand consider undertaking a review of the nurse's competence.