

MEDICATION ERRORS – IMPORTANCE OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

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ABSTRACT

Healthcare workers face challenges as doctors are seeing more patients every hour every day and all other healthcare staff including nurses, administrators are required to meet the demands of changing paradigms in the healthcare. Workload and systemic issues can lead to medication errors. Medication errors are serious concern for healthcare. Medication errors are a threat to patient safety. Medication errors make a noteworthy part of this concern and it is evident that these errors can have a serious result such as a death or disability and serious damage to the image and reputation of the healthcare organization. Many medication errors are due to the information failure. Therefore to prevent such undesirable events, the related information flow must be understood. Medication errors are among the most common health threatening mistakes. Such mistakes are considered as a global problem which increases mortality rates, length of a hospital stay, and related costs. Reconciliation of medication histories and database of patients' information, standardisation of systems and procedures can assist practitioners in being effective in information and communication and thus prevent medication errors.

Keywords:

Medication errors, Information system, Communication.

INTRODUCTION

Medication errors are evident in the hospitals. Each year a large proportion of medical prescriptions have some degree of error. In fact research indicates that globally, large number of deaths occurred each year as a result of medical mistakes. Medication errors are a threat to

patient safety and the health of patients, can be costly, and can result in longer hospitalisation or death of a patient. Medication errors can occur at all levels of the clinical process including administration, diagnosis, treatment and discharge. Common cause of medication errors include incorrect diagnose, prescribing errors, drug- drug related reaction, dose miscalculation and lack of patient education. Other factor related to job stress improper training or education. Medication error is preventable and if handled and managed properly can lead to efficiency in the system and help in building the trust on the healthcare organization. .

TYPES OF MEDICATION ERRORS

Omission Error

The failure to administer an ordered dose to a patient before the next schedule dose or failure to prescribe a drug and product that is indicate used for the patient.

Prescribing Error

Prescribing error is incorrect drug product selection, dose quantity concentration or instruction for use of a drug product ordered or authorised by physician.

Wrong Time Error

Differing the predefined time interval from the scheduled time

Improper Dosing Errors

Where the greater or lesser amount of dose is given without the proper knowledge of the condition of patient.

Unauthorised Drug Error

Nurse gives a medication without a physician order.

If a medication from one patient was given mistakenly to another patient.

Wrong Dosage Form Error

Doses administered or dispensed in different form of that ordered by the prescribing physician are classified as wrong dosage form errors.

Wrong Drug Preparation Error

A medication is incorrectly formulated if little diluting solution is added when a medication is reconstituted.

Fragmented Error

A lack of communication exists between the prescribing physician and other health care specialist.

OBJECTIVES

- To identify the causes of medication errors
- To assess the role of information and communication in handling medication errors

METHODOLOGY

Secondary data is collected through different sources like books, research articles, internet, newspaper, magazines for the completion of this research paper.

DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS

Cause Of Medication Errors.

The various causes for medication errors are.

1. People

- Rushing.
- Lapses in performance.
- No sure of proper procedure.
- Guessing.

2. Pharmacy

- No review of profile.
- Dispense wrong drug.
- Misinterpretation.

3. Work environment

- High activity and stress.
- Noise level.
- Distraction.

4. Communication Failure

- Between nurses.
- Between medical office and nurses.
- Between consultant and medical office.
- Between consultant and nurses.

5. Equipment

- No proper computer system on nursing station.

6. Materials

- Formulary too large.
- Increased workload.

7. Physician

- Incomplete order.
- Unclear order.
- Wrong order.

8. Nurse.

- Not renew with fresh order.
- Untrained nurses.
- Doctor informed order not followed by nurses.
- Performance deficit.

Importance Of Information And Communication In Reducing Medication Errors

Communication is key in tackling medication errors. Increasing proactive and effective communication at a hospital will help reduce medication errors. Medication errors are expected to reduce with the increase in awareness and recognition of medication errors.

Clear information and effective communication contribute to

- The safe use of medicines,
- Promote the reporting, discussion, undertaking and prevention of

medication errors;

Some authors suggest using “SBAR” (Situation, Background, Assessment, Recommendation) methods prescribed to improve communication.

Communication is vital and very important in reducing medication errors.

CONCLUSION

The medication errors result in significant adverse events. The adverse events could be due to the variety of reasons. Human mistakes such as slips and lapses are due to tiredness, stress, poor time and inexperience or lack of knowledge on one hand whereas on the other hand treatment process point of the clinical process may result in medication errors. Many of the errors are caused due to incorrect communication. The majority of the errors are preventable and it is recommended that effective standardisation, i.e., standardisation of medicine names, policies and procedures as well as the standardisation of an easy to use reporting system for errors would help disseminate information and address the issues appropriately. Effective communication and information system, viz., patient information system would help in reducing the errors.

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