

A PHARMACY TECHNICIAN-LED QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PROJECT – GETTING WARD MEDICATION STORAGE AND HANDLING RIGHT!

AUTHOR: KELLY MACNAB

CHRIS O'BRIEN LIFEHOUSE, CAMPERDOWN

BACKGROUND

Echoing the works done by the Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia, Chris O'Brien Lifehouse recently embarked on a ward-based pharmacy technician trial to explore opportunities for experienced technicians to contribute to quality use of medicine, medication stewardship and medication management activities.

OBJECTIVE

This project is aimed at highlighting pharmacy technician-led quality improvement projects as part of a broader function of ward-based pharmacy technicians.

ACTION

A baseline audit was conducted by a ward-based technician to review insulin storage and handling. Patients prescribed insulin were identified and their allocated insulin devices checked to assess proper storage, patient-specific labelling and initial use or expiry date. The baseline audit results were presented as an education poster with recommendations highlighting best practice (Figure 3). Audit results were also presented by a technician to nursing staff at unit meetings. Following intervention, a follow-up audit was conducted to assess the impact of the technician-led intervention in promoting the safe handling and storage of insulin.

EVALUATION

Of 98 used insulin devices audited, 45% were stored correctly while 7% of devices were not identifiable to a patient. 53% of devices had a date of first use and 2% had an expiry date. Following the development of a new policy, a new insulin expiry sticker and the implementation of a technician led education package, a post intervention audit identified that 97% of insulin devices were stored correctly, 98% had a patient identification label, 98% of devices had an opening date and 100% had an expiry/discard date.

DISCUSSION

A pharmacy technician-led quality improvement project is an effective and efficient means of promoting medication safety and quality use of medicines. This project demonstrates the benefits of embedding pharmacy technicians in clinical settings and leveraging their experience and knowledge in identifying and addressing gaps in current processes to promote medication safety and quality use of medicines for patients.

