

Waiting on Pharmacy – Why does it take so long to complete a discharge?

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Aim

To review factors that may result in delays to the timely provision of medicines to facilitate discharge in two acute regional public hospitals in the North West of Tasmania.

Method

In July 2019, clinical pharmacists recorded the following information when reconciling discharge prescriptions:

- Time prescription received
- Time taken to reconcile
- Discrepancies (number and type)
- Time that the patient received discharge medications

Retrospectively the discharge summaries were audited to see whether these included accurate medicines information for communication with the patients General Practitioner (GP).

Results

- 322 discharge prescriptions were audited during the audit period.
- There were 352 discrepancies requiring clarification before dispensing and the patient being discharged. Figure 1 explains the types of discrepancies identified.
- The average length of time between receiving a prescription and providing to the patient was 119 minutes (Figure 2).
- 55% of discharge summaries contained the correct medications

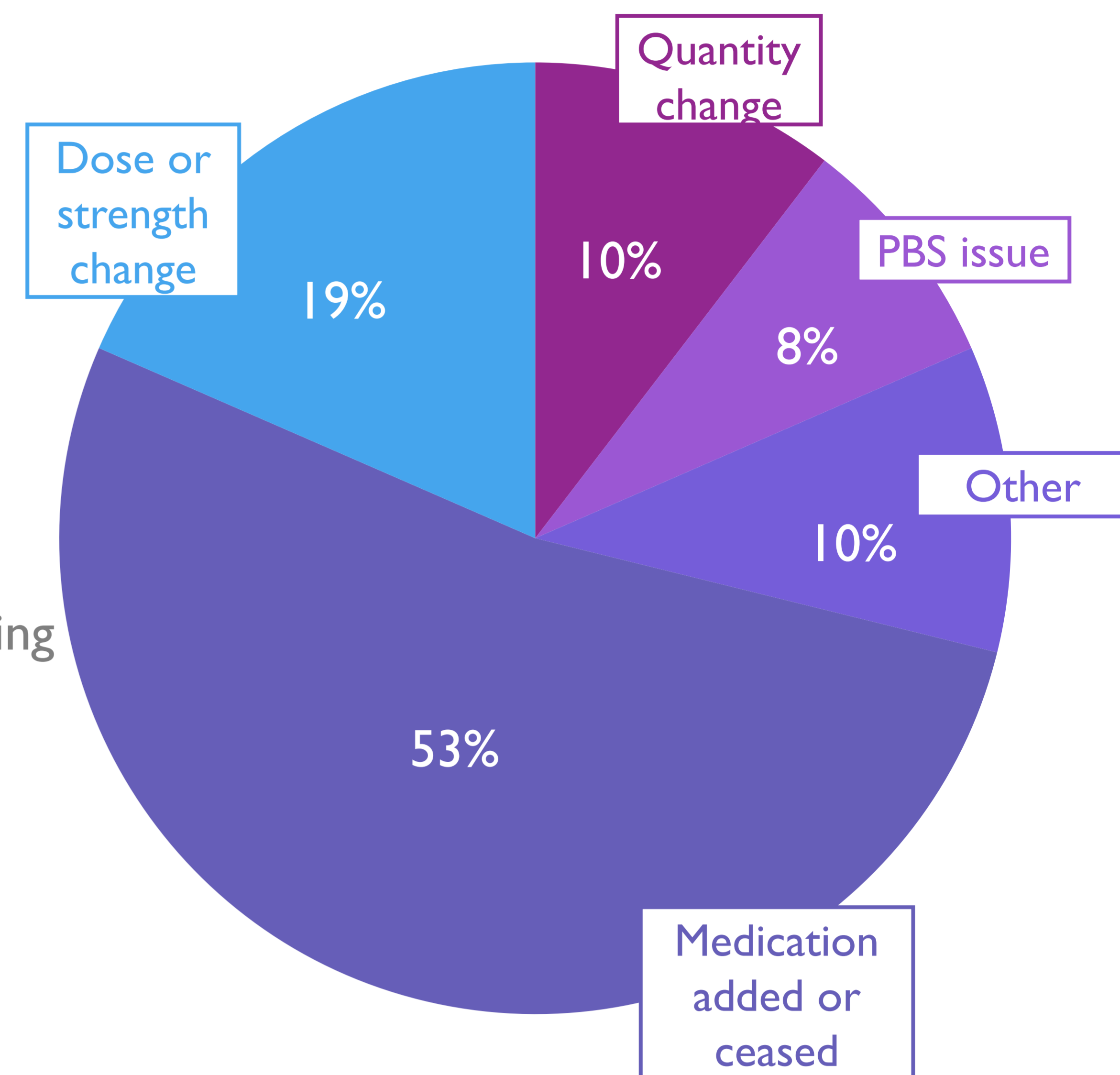


Figure 1. Type of discrepancy on discharge prescription

Discussion

This audit highlights the time taken for discharge prescriptions to be finalised is significantly impacted by the number and type of discrepancies found on prescriptions. It emphasises the importance that Pharmacists play in the discharge processes ensuring patients not only get the right medication, but accurate instructions on their medications for them and their community providers.

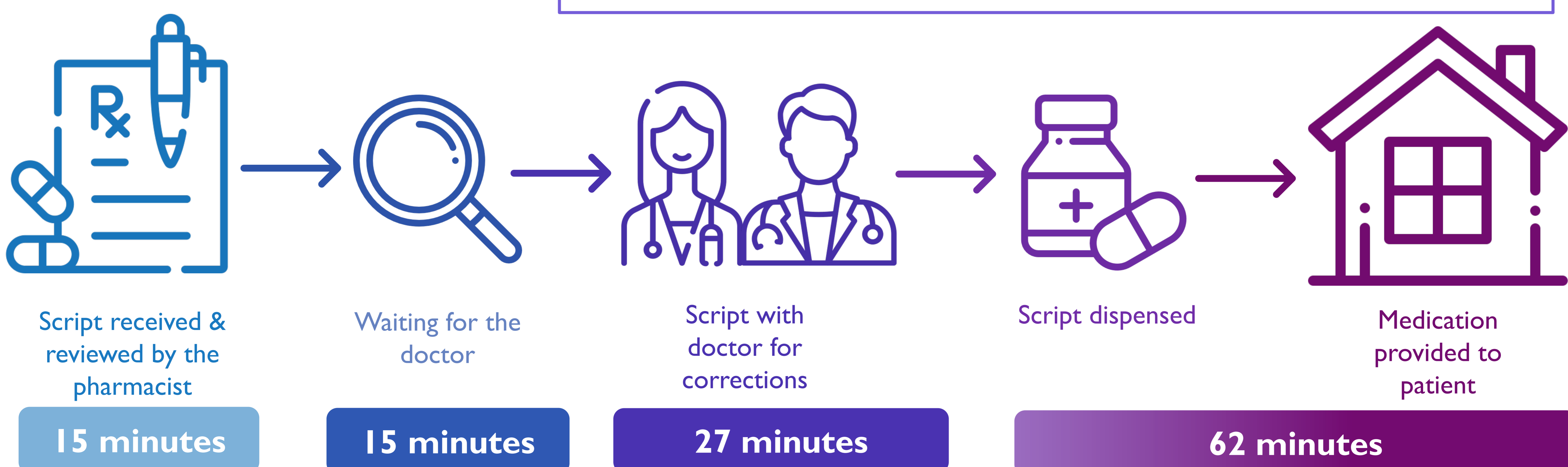


Figure 2. Time taken to undertake discharge process