

# Implementation of Changes in Practical Strategies of Medication Safety in Community Pharmacies

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## DESCRIPTION

Medication safety is an essential component of healthcare, as it ensures that patients receive the right medication, in the right dose, at the right time, and in the right way. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), medication safety is defined as "the prevention of errors and adverse effects arising from the medication process, which includes the prescribing, dispensing, administering, and monitoring of medicines". Despite the efforts made to improve medication safety, medication errors and Adverse Drug Events (ADEs) continue to occur, leading to patient harm, increased healthcare costs, and even death. Medication errors occur at all stages of the medication process, and they can have serious consequences for patients. Medication errors can be classified into two types: errors of commission and errors of omission. Errors of commission occur when the wrong medication, wrong dose, wrong route of administration, or wrong frequency is prescribed, dispensed, or administered. Errors of omission occur when a medication is not prescribed, dispensed, or administered when it should have been. Medication errors can result in ADEs, which are defined as "any injury caused by the use of a medication". ADEs can be predictable, such as those caused by known side effects of a medication, or unpredictable, such as those caused by an allergic reaction.

There are several factors that contribute to medication errors and ADEs. One of the main factors is the complexity of the medication process. The medication process involves multiple healthcare professionals, including prescribers, pharmacists, nurses, and other healthcare staff, and each step can be prone to errors. The use of abbreviations, acronyms, and symbols in medication orders can also contribute to errors. Miscommunication between healthcare professionals can also lead to medication errors. Another factor is the lack of knowledge and training among healthcare professionals regarding medication safety. Healthcare professionals may not be aware of the risks associated with certain medications, or they may not be familiar with the proper dosing and administration of medications. Patient-related factors such as non-adherence to medication regimens, polypharmacy, and co-morbidities can also

contribute to medication errors and ADEs. To address medication safety, healthcare organizations have implemented various strategies, including the use of technology, medication reconciliation, and patient education. The use of technology, such as electronic prescribing systems, barcode scanning systems, and electronic medication administration records, can help reduce medication errors and improve medication safety. Electronic prescribing systems can reduce errors associated with handwriting and transcription errors, while barcode scanning systems can ensure that the right medication is dispensed and administered to the right patient. Electronic medication administration records can also help healthcare professionals track medication administration and identify potential errors.

Medication reconciliation is another strategy that can improve medication safety. Medication reconciliation involves the process of comparing a patient's current medications with those prescribed during a hospital stay or clinic visit. This process helps identify discrepancies, such as omissions or duplications and can help prevent medication errors and ADEs. Medication reconciliation can also help identify potential drug interactions and ensure that patients are receiving the correct dosages of their medications.

Patient education is also an important component of medication safety. Patients play a crucial role in managing their medications and ensuring that they are taking them as prescribed. Patients should be educated on the purpose of their medications, how to take them properly, and any potential side effects. Patients should also be encouraged to ask questions and inform their healthcare providers of any changes in their health status or medications. In addition, healthcare professionals should ensure that patients are able to read and understand medication labels and instructions.

Medication safety is a critical aspect of healthcare. Healthcare providers must take steps to ensure that medication is used safely and effectively by patients, minimizing the risks and maximizing the benefits. Strategies such as appropriate prescribing, dispensing, administering, and monitoring, as well as medication reconciliation, patient education, and reporting, can help improve medication safety and prevent medication errors.

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