



Use of Strategy List to Decrease Interruptions During Medication Administration



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Background

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) indicates that 1.3 million people in the United States are injured as a result of medication errors annually. Of these injuries, 250,000 resulted in death of the patient according to Johns Hopkins patient safety experts. A literature review of 25 research studies identified that a significant amount of medication errors occurred from interruptions during the medication administration process. The purpose of this quality improvement project was to create a strategy list to present to nursing staff at a large rural teaching hospital that outlined ways to decrease distractions during medication administration. The strategy list included methods of decreasing distractions such as retiring personal staff phones and wearing brightly colored sashes during the medication administration process.

Six Rights of Medication

Always make sure to identify the **RIGHT PATIENT** by asking the patient their first and last name and making sure that the name matches with the order.

Identify the **RIGHT MEDICATION** by checking the medication label in hand with the medication order. Some medications look alike and sound alike so always be aware of this concept.

Identifying the **RIGHT DOSE** entails ensuring that the strength and dosage of the medication at hand equals the amount ordered. Is it half, whole, or multiple tablets ordered? Will dosage calculations be required before giving the medication? Always make sure to check calculations with another nurse.

Is it the **RIGHT TIME** for the patient's medication? Before administering any medication, make sure that the allotted amount of time has passed in between so that the patient does not receive too much, or too little medication. This is important for the relief of pain.

Is the medication being given by the **RIGHT ROUTE**? There are many ways to give a medication such as crushed, chewed, swallowed whole, dissolved in liquid, etc. Make sure the route matches the order before administering the medication. Also, make sure that if the order asks for a medication to be crushed, it is a tablet that is able to be crushed before giving to the patient.

RIGHT DOCUMENTATION- Document immediately after the medication is given or if busy write it down so that it can later be charted correctly.

ALWAYS check each step 3 times before proceeding!

Strategy List to Decrease Interruptions During Medication Administration

- Nurses will wear brightly colored sashes during medication administration.
- Nurses will retire personal staff phones during the duration of medication administration.
- Nurses will place a colored dot next to their name on the board posted at the nurses station when passing medication.
- Nurses will use a check-list for each patient when pulling medications in order to keep track of which medications have and haven't been pulled
- Nurses will ask patients and family members to express any questions or concerns before medication administration begins
- Nurses will use a verification booth before entering the patient's room to check the medications with the electronic and paper orders
- Nurses will say each medication name out loud when pulling and administering medications
- The area surrounding a patient's IV pole will be considered a "no interruption zone" when a nurse is hanging IV fluids and medications and when programming pumps
- A visual timer will be attached to IV poles to be used when nurses administer IV push medications
- Nurses will use both the electronic and paper list of their patient's medications to verify orders before administration.

Clinical Implications

The sash identifies that the nurse is administering medications and notifies other nurses to not speak to her/him unless it is an emergency until the sash is removed.

Eliminating the staff phone rids of potential distraction by phone call.

The colored dot identifies that the nurse is administering medications and notifies other nurses to not speak to her/him unless it is an emergency until the dot is removed.

The checklist is an organization method to help ensure the six rights of medication are used during the administration.

Allowing patient and family to express any concerns prior to medication administration can prevent errors made by the nurse due to distractions.

Using a verification booth allows for the nurse to take their time and ensure accuracy in medications to be administered.

Saying the medication name out loud gives the nurse an opportunity to catch sound alike medication errors.

Making the area around an IV pole a "no interruption zone" notifies other nurses to not speak to her/him unless it is an emergency until they leave that area.

A visual timer helps ensure accuracy in the time medications are ordered to be given, such as push medications that are to be given over a certain period of time.

Using both electronic and paper lists to verify medication orders gives additional opportunities for errors to be caught.

