Patient Engagement in Medication Safety

Challenges and Opportunities

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Mothers Against Medical Error
Consumers Advancing Patient Safety
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The desire to take medicine is perhaps the greatest feature which distinguishes man from animals.

-Sir William Osler
Patients report errors as occurring most often at the prescription phase of the medication process.

Minor drug reactions can cascade into catastrophic medical harm because they are not recognized as such.

Inappropriate polypharmacy, including overuse of psychiatric drugs, is a serious problem.

Overmedication of the elderly occurs in every part of the globe.

Repeated adverse events from re-prescribing of the same drug are common.
Lessons from Lewis’s case

• Anyone taking a high-risk medication is a high-risk patient.

• Patients can quickly become high-risk as their condition changes.

• Healthcare workers caring for specialized populations like children and the elderly need expertise in specialized dosing, symptoms, and vital signs.
Patient Engagement in Medication Safety

Some Problems

Overestimation of benefit; underestimation of risk

Belief that healthcare, especially medication, is too complicated to understand

Excessive deference to the authority of the physician

Fragmented healthcare system

Burden of care & overmedication
# Patient Engagement in Medication Safety

## Some Solutions

- **Shared decision-making**
- **Demystification** - information about medications, especially high-risk medications
- **Collaborative medication review; reducing medication burden**
- **Mapping the medication journey**
- **Reporting adverse events**
WHO Global Patient Safety Challenge – Medication Without Harm

Introducing Mobile Application on 5 Moments for Medication Safety

5 Moments for Medication Safety

- Starting a medication
- Taking a medication
- Adding a medication
- Reviewing my medication
- Stopping my medication

The 5 Moments for Medication Safety are the key moments where action by the patient is critical to reducing the risk of errors associated with the use of their medications. Each moment includes critical questions and suggestions for the patient and some may require input from a health professional to be answered and/or followed.

This text is intended for use by patients, their families and caregivers, with the help of health professionals, at all levels of care and across all settings.

Introducing Mobile Application on 5 Moments for Medication Safety

WHOmedsafe app

Will guide you through the key moments where your actions can reduce the risk of medication-related harm.

Ask your health care professional important questions, keep the answers in a structured way to better manage your medicines. Stay Healthy!

https://www.who.int/initiatives/medication-without-harm
Patient Stories

https://www.who.int/initiatives/medication-without-harm
Giving patients the tools to be part of the safety system

- Expert medication reviews, especially at care transitions
- Information on high-risk drugs
- Signs of drug reaction or overdose
- How to access medication information
- How to report an adverse drug reaction or medication incident
Uppsala Monitoring Centre
Getting Patients Involved in Medicines Safety
A Social Movement - Barriers

• Low uptake of materials
• Limited funding for public awareness
• Mindset that prizes innovation over safety
• Barrage of pharmaceutical advertising to both prescribers and the public
• Fear of discouraging people from taking needed medications
A Social Movement