Empowering patients and families for medication safety
Patient engagement tool: “5 Moments for Medication Safety”

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Patient Engagement in Medication Safety in Low- and Middle-Income Countries

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Patient engagement is essential to safe medication use

To engage patients, we must first engage health care workers

- Doctors
- Nurses
- Pharmacists
- Hospital administrators
Barriers to patient engagement: PHYSICIANS

• Doctors have too little time to discuss medications with the patient
  o Patients leave without vital information such as risks, side effects, or when to stop the medication
  o Doctors who are pressed for time may not ask what other medicines the patient is taking
  o Some medicines could lead to addiction or fatal errors if not well explained
• Bad handwriting
  o This is a particular danger for low-literacy patients
• Lack of follow-up with patients
  o The physician often does not learn how well the medication worked or if an adverse event occurred
• Poor documentation of medications in patients’ medical records
Barriers to patient engagement: NURSES

• Nurses are not always taught patient engagement and communication or expected to have these skills
• Poor patient engagement is compounded by
  o Heavy workloads
  o Lack of ongoing medication safety training
  o Inadequate supervision
  o Lack of accountability for safety and quality of care
  o System factors such as look-alike, sound-alike medications
    • Overloaded nurses can make mistakes and give the wrong medication
    • Patients do not have the knowledge to catch the mistakes
Barriers to patient engagement: PHARMACISTS

- Community pharmacists play a large role in medical care in many countries
  - Patients find it easier and cheaper to go to a pharmacist for care than to a doctor’s clinic
  - Pharmacists give medicines without prescription, which is a big problem
- Unqualified assistants are sometimes left in charge of pharmacies
- There is no follow-up with doctor when patients get unprescribed medicines
Barriers to patient engagement: HOSPITALS

• Risk to patients is amplified by factors the patient do not know about
  o Improper storage of drugs
  o Not separating high-risk medications from other medications, raising the likelihood of misidentification
  o Wrong dose sent to the patient
• Too few hospital pharmacists - means there is often no medication review upon discharge
• Care is poorly coordinated
  o Patients may be left in-charge of their own care with little information, increasing chance of improper medication
• There are few good systems for reporting adverse events and medication errors
Patient factors contributing to medication safety issues

• Illiteracy/poor education
  o Uneducated patients can not read labels, expiry dates, instructions, doctors’ handwriting

• Low income
  o Leads to depending on pharmacists for health care

• Complete trust in doctors and nurses as authorities

• Lack of knowledge about their medications

• Reluctance to ask questions
  o Patients do not know what to ask
  o Doctor may not be receptive to questions

• Difficulty of reporting errors and adverse events
  o No clear reporting channel
  o Patients don’t know how to report
  o Patients do not trust that reporting will have an effect
Patient engagement: Possible solutions for health care providers

Ask governments and hospitals to

• Develop patient champions in hospitals
• Train health care providers how to talk to patients
  o How to use plain language
  o What to tell patients
  o What to ask patients
• Improve regulation of medications and pharmacies
• Improve coordination of dispensing and supervision of nurses
• It’s all about training, supervision, prevention of errors. This will give confidence to patients
Use media and NGOs to

- Create expectations
  - To tell doctor about other medications
  - To review medicines at transitions
  - To expect follow-up from doctor
- Teach patients not to be afraid
  - To ask for more time in the appointment
  - To ask questions about medicines
  - Not to give up; keep asking!
- Teach patients the questions to ask
  - Medication side effects and interactions
  - When to stop a medicine
  - How to store their medicines...
- Teach how to report adverse events and errors
  - Create a good system
  - Make reporting easy to do
  - Encourage people to do it
Conclusions

• The problem of the patient in our countries is complicated

• Everything is interconnected. You cannot exclude empowering the patient from other factors

• If hospitals and providers control well for safety and awareness, they will have success in patient engagement

• Government, the media and NGOs have a large role to play in raising awareness
5 Moments for Medication Safety

WHO Global Patient Safety Challenge
Medication Without Harm
GOAL
Raise awareness among patients of need to take precautions to ensure medication safety.

PRESENTATION
Plain language guide raising questions for patients to ask at key moments at which risk of harm from medications can be reduced.

INSPIRATION
Sir Liam Donaldson and the 5 Moments for Hand Hygiene

https://www.who.int/initiatives/medication-without-harm
5 questions for each moment
- Some are self-reflective for the patient
- Some may require support from the health care professional

Active patient engagement
- Intended to encourage curiosity about the medications patients are taking
- Intended to empower patients and caregivers to communicate openly with their health professionals.

For use at all levels of care and across all settings.

https://www.who.int/initiatives/medication-without-harm
5 Moments for Medication Safety

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Formats:
- Booklet with guidance
- Flyer
- Infographic poster
- Pamphlet
- Mobile app

https://www.who.int/initiatives/medication-without-harm
Introducing Mobile Application on 5 Moments for Medication Safety

WHO medsafe app

Will guide you through the 5 key moments where your action 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 medications. Stay Healthy!

Powered by: World Health Organization

Thank you