

Standardization of medication counselling material for paediatric solid organ transplant recipients and their families



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Background

Paediatric drug therapy in solid organ transplants is complex and demanding. Lack of patient medication counselling material written in Finnish led to situation where the quality of the drug information to patients and their families was very heterogeneous depending on the healthcare professionals providing it.

Purpose

- To improve and uniform the content and quality of patient medication counselling by creating a written counselling material and a patient guide for pediatric solid organ transplant recipients
- To uniform practices and procedures on the ward concerning medication treatment
- To show how clinical pharmacist can support the multiprofessional team and patients and promote medication safety

Material and methods

Healthcare professionals (nurses, physicians, pharmacists) providing medication counselling were observed to find out the current situation with best practices and shortcomings. A summary of the observations was used as a basis for developing written medication counselling material. Clinical pharmacist's experience and drug information databases were used to complement the information gathered from the observations.

Results

The need for a practical and uniform guide for medications most commonly used with pediatric organ transplant patients was underlined with the observations. Consequently, such a material and guide was developed (Table 1).

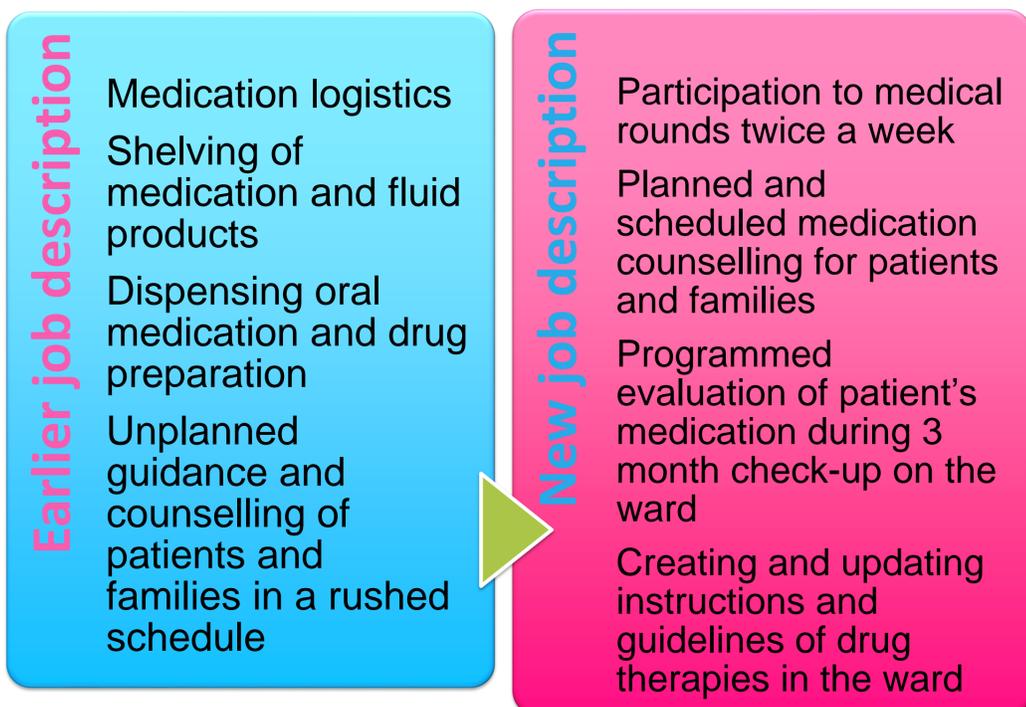
Due to the results of the observations, the further development of medication counselling process was taken into focus on the ward. The role of the clinical pharmacist was modified by removing tasks concerning drug preparation and logistics. (Picture 1.)

Conclusions

The written medication counselling material and patient guide for pediatric organ transplant recipients helps both the staff and families to understand the use, goals and special considerations of the drug therapy. The use of written counselling material uniforms and standardizes the content and the quality of medication counselling given by the different health care professionals. The new role of the clinical pharmacist has increased multiprofessional co-operation on the ward.

Table 1. Common aids used in dosing and handling of medication as presented in the written counselling material

Common aids used in dosing and handling of medication		
Paediatric medication in practice often requires dividing, crushing, dissolving and using other aids like needles in correct dosing and handling of preparations. It is recommended to use only approved equipment and aids in handling of medication in order to achieve best possible outcomes in paediatric drug therapy		
Tablet splitter		Tablets are easily and precisely divided into right doses. Tablet splitters are readily sold in pharmacies across the country. Tablet splitters are durable aids in dosing and handling of medication and require only minimal cleaning in between uses.
Tablet crusher		Tablet crusher makes it possible to crush and pulverize tablets in to fine powder form. This makes the dissolving of medication easier with liquids like water, milk and juice before giving the intended doses to children. Tablets crushers are available in pharmacies, and there are many different forms and brands available depending on the selection of each pharmacy. Before crushing or pulverizing any tablets, always make sure from your hospital or pharmacies, that specific medication can be crushed (for example slow release tablets!).
Doset for medication		Dosets (tablet dispensers) make it possible to prepare ready oral doses of medication up to one week (and more in some brands). There are many models and brands available in pharmacies and some food markets. It is recommended to choose a model which best corresponds individual needs and daily rhythm of prescribed medication.
Oral syringes		Oral syringes are for the dosing and administration of liquid medicine either orally or through nasogastric tube/PEG. Usually it is possible to draw specific doses of medicines to oral syringes ready for administration for several days. In these cases oral syringes should always be closed with a cap and stored in correct temperature until the medicine is administered to the child (for example medication that require cold storage!). Oral syringes are available from hospitals or local medical equipment facilities.
Tablet film (Medcoat®) and gel (Gloup®)		Tablet films and gels help to cover possible bad taste of tablets. They also help swallowing of tablets by removing possible coarse surfaces of tablets and make the doses move more easily from mouth to throat. These products can also be used with divided tablets, but it is not recommended to use them with chewable tablets. Both of these products are available in pharmacies.



Picture 1. Modified job description for clinical pharmacist