

Pharmacy Team Involvement in the Preparation and Administration of Medicines on Inpatients Wards: An Exploratory Study

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BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

Lack of nursing staff, interruptions when preparing and administering medicines and limited knowledge can increase the risk of medication errors. The involvement of pharmacy team members in the preparation and administration of medicines on hospital wards has been suggested as an opportunity to; provide better guidance and support to nurses, enhance patient safety and improve service delivery.

The purpose of the study was to explore in-depth the views of healthcare professionals towards the involvement of pharmacy team (pharmacists and pharmacy technicians) in the preparation and administration of medications on inpatient wards in an acute, general hospital in Malta.

METHODS

⇒ Qualitative, semi-structured, one-to-one interviews with a purposive sample of healthcare providers (e.g. pharmacists, pharmacy technicians, doctors and nurses) from various clinical areas were conducted.

⇒ Setting: Mater Dei Hospital (Malta).

⇒ A topic guide was developed to explore the acceptability and extent of involvement, including related limitations and benefits.

⇒ Interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim and analysed using framework analysis.

RESULTS / FINDINGS

⇒ Two pharmacists, three pharmacy technicians, seven nurses and one doctor from various clinical areas (medicine, surgery, critical care and emergency) were interviewed.

⇒ All 13 participants had overall positive views towards pharmacy team involvement.

⇒ There were mixed opinions on the extent of involvement of the pharmacy team as shown in figure 1.

⇒ The perceived benefits of such involvement were less medication errors and delayed treatment.

⇒ The main barriers identified in implementing such services are lack of pharmacy staff and limited practical experience of preparing and administering medicines.

Figure 1: Different degrees of involvement of the pharmacy team



CONCLUSIONS

⇒ Attitudes towards involvement were overall favourable, however various levels of involvement were identified.

⇒ Further work should investigate the extent of involvement and feasibility across different clinical areas.

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