Background: Medication errors (ME) and the consequent preventable adverse drug events (pADE) are a major burden on inpatient care. They are not only possible source of patient harm but may lead to increased healthcare cost due to prolonged length of stay (LOS) as a consequent of pADEs. CPOE (Computerized physician order entry) occasionally with a clinical decision support tool (CDS) has been shown to increase patient safety, and it's essential for patient-level medication ordering. Due to the scarce financial resources of clinics and inpatient care exploration of new ways for being more cost-effective is a must.

Purpose of the study: Studies examining CPOE systems in inpatient care were collected with cost or other resource utilization related outcomes. Development of these services might be a good opportunity to expand clinical pharmacist competencies.

Methods: We conducted a systematic search of Scopus, PubMed and Web of Science databases. Search terms were determined according to PICO. Non-English papers and studies providing no original data were excluded.

Results: 1693 abstracts were screened, thereafter 67 full text articles became analyzed of which 27 met the inclusion criteria. We have identified 18 partial and 8 full economic evaluations. Except 1 cost-benefit and 1 cost-utility analysis all the publications included were cost-effectiveness studies. The clinical outcomes are dominated by pADE, although LOS (1 case), QALY (1 case) are also apparent. In contrast, the input parameters are quite different. Every analysis have demonstrated cost-reduction and patient safety enhancement but methodological differences are present in terms of perspective, discounting, duration, inflation, sensitivity, inputs and definitions (e.g. definition of ADE).

Conclusion:

The diversity of outcome data types used in these studies are making it difficult to draw a conclusion about cost-effectiveness of CPOE systems. It is visible, that no generally accepted definition is present over what system can be called CPOE. On the other hand, it will only be possible to compare different CPOEs if common agreement is developed in terms of outcomes observed by studies. Clinical pharmacists can play an important role in the unification of the upcoming studies and collection of data.