

Good Practice Initiative:

**Medication Safety Audits  
developed and conducted by a hospital pharmacy in Finland**

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**Background:**

Numerous studies in US, Europe and elsewhere have drawn attention to the costs and consequences of medication errors. Initiatives are needed to improve the safety of medication practices of healthcare units and prevent medication errors.

**Aim:**

To aim of this initiative was to develop a pharmacist-led audit tool to evaluate the safety of medication processes in hospital wards in Satakunta Central Hospital. Content of the audit frame was adapted from the Institute for Safe Medication Practices (ISMP) Self-Assessment Tool for Hospitals 2004 (231 items) with the permission of ISMP.

**Methods:**

Delphi consensus technique was used to apply the tool to Finnish healthcare practices. In total, 4 Delphi panels were arranged with 6 local and 8 national level experts including pharmacists, nurses and physicians. Experts were asked to assess the applicability in first two panels; desirability in third and feasibility in fourth panel for each single item of the self-assessment tool.

**Results:**

Finalized audit tool included 93 out of 231 items. The customized audit tool was first pilot tested and then used at ten wards. At the audit meetings hospital pharmacist and ward nurses discussed and rated each audit item based on how well the item was instructed in each ward. Many poorly instructed areas were identified such as prescribing and transmitting the prescription; labeling; distributing and administering; and educating the patient. Based on the audit results, a high-alert medication list was developed; double-checking practice was implemented; verbal medication orders were limited; medication error reporting was promoted.

**Conclusion:**

Medication Safety Audits helped to identify the significant risks in medication process and to improve the safe medication practices.

*No conflict of interest*

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