

Assessing Completeness of Best Possible Medication History by Profession
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Background

A prior study illustrated the increased accuracy of the Best Possible Medication History (BPMH) when performed by trained pharmacy technicians. This study examines continued effectiveness of pharmacy technicians across a 3 month trial.

Description

The completion of a BPMH is required for all admitted patients. An accurate BPMH minimizes the potential for errors during medication reconciliation. The responsibility of gathering BPMH is not delegated to one particular profession, though the task is typically performed by a Registered Nurse (RN) or a Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN). Initially, it was unknown which profession would be best suited to gathering BPMH.

Action

A prior study indicated that allowing pharmacy technicians to collect BPMH increased the overall accuracy of the information. Subsequently, a pilot project was implemented in the Emergency Department. Trained pharmacy technicians gathered all BPMH information including allergies, prescriptions, herbals, and over-the-counter (OTC) medications. Other professions only gathered BPMH when the Pharmacy Department was closed.

Evaluation

An auditing form was developed that was used to perform a retrospective chart review of 941 patients who visited the Emergency Department during a 3 month period. The auditing form was designed to determine the completeness of BPMH, and quantify the use of dangerous abbreviations. The results of this evaluation show that, when compared to RNs and LPNs, pharmacy technicians had higher rates of completed BPMH information, including a larger number of herbals and OTC medications identified. Pharmacy technicians also have significantly lower rates of dangerous abbreviations present on BPMH forms.

Implications

The accuracy and completeness of BPMH information can be increased by delegating the duty to pharmacy technicians. As pharmacy technicians become licensed, their expanding scope of practice could include the gathering of BPMH. An accurate BPMH will allow physicians and pharmacists to make more informed clinical decisions, thereby improving patient care and safety.