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Medical incidents are becoming a frequent occurrence in the healthcare industry. Because of these incidents patients are left severely disabled and many have died. A study done by John Hopkins Medical shows that 10 percent of US deaths are now due to medical errors. Johns Hopkins patient safety experts analyzed the medical death rate data over an eight-year period and calculated that more than 250,000 deaths per year are due to medical error in the U.S. John Hopkins (2015). To counteract these errors The Joint Commission Organization (JCAHO) established the National Patient Safety Goals (NPSG’s) program. One of the major goals under JCAHO’s derivative of medication safety is maintaining and communicating accurate patient medical information. It has been shown, through evidence, that discrepancies in the administration of medication can have negative and severe effects on the patient’s outcome. These discrepancies can occur when comparing a patient’s current medication with the new medication, duplicated medications or doses, omitted medications and the finally not following the six rights of medication administration.

The reconciliation of a patient’s medication is where many medication errors occur.

According to an article written by the Indian Health Services JCAHO defines medication reconciliations as "the process of comparing a patient's medication orders to all of the medications that the patient has been taking. (Mascioli, S., & Carrico, C. B. (2016). Many patients have multiple doctors and take multiple medications and this makes it challenging to account and record all the patients drugs. The provider and nurse must do a thorough verification of all the patient’s medication. As part of this verification, the healthcare team must compare all medication ordered in all non-24-hr settings. These medications include scheduled medications as well as medications taken as needed. In doing this the healthcare profession is ensuring that he or she is making the best effort in obtaining this vital information.

When all medications are verified the healthcare professional must discontinue any duplicate medication. They will also clarify medications that have multiple doses or routes, these can cause an overdose of medication or aspiration or worse. Medication absorption is important, so medication must be given accurately to ensure the best therapeutic results. It is imperative that nurses recognize the patient’s correct route for medication administration and alert the doctor and pharmacist to the correct route for the patient in event of any changes in status.

Utilization of the six rights of medication administration is important in preventing medication errors. “Many medication errors can be linked, in some way, to an inconsistency in adhering to these six right (Potter and Perry,2013). The healthcare professional must verify that they have the right medication intended for the right person, it must be the right dosage, route and it must be at the right time following administration you must be diligent and precise in documenting.

The goal in patient safety is to eliminate medication errors to ensure the best possible recovery and enviably positive patient outcomes. JACHO and several agencies have established professional standards and rules in effort to eliminate medications error and prevent incidents. As healthcare professionals we must work as in team to alert the healthcare team to possible errors to maintain the safety and stability of the patient’s health. Utilization of the expertise of the pharmacist and physician for clarifications and information on medication can prevent errors. Overall we must use all judgment to prevent medication errors in healthcare .

References

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