



New Drug Update and Ways to Prevent Errors during Transitions of Care

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Summary: About two-thirds of patients are affected by a medication error during the hospital admission and discharge process. Many of these errors are preventable and unfortunately can lead to patient harm, including adverse events and hospital readmissions.

- Insulin is among the top 5 meds involved in medication errors. Therefore, when a newer insulin product is in use, we need to consider strategies to reduce errors.
- The new heart failure medication sacubitril/valsartan (Entresto) is indicated for systolic heart failure. It is more effective than ACE inhibitors; however, it is more expensive and poses a higher risk of hypotension. Patients with frequent heart failure exacerbations may be switched to sacubitril/valsartan. It's important to provide education prior to discharge to ensure safe transition.
- There are different types of inhalers used for COPD and asthma. They include metered-dose inhalers, soft-mist inhalers, and dry-powder inhalers. Only one in three patients use the inhaler correctly, which is why it's important to review inhaler technique prior to discharge.

Newer medications provide more options for treatment but also introduce more opportunities for errors. Strategies to reduce error risk include clarification and documentation of the patient's medication history, monitoring for reaction to the medications, patient education, and a clear plan for transition of care.

Nursing Implications:

- Many new medications are similar to medications already available, increasing the risk for error.
- Many new medications may not be available at the hospital and may be substituted to hospital formulary products, increasing the risk for error during transitions of care.

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Key Takeaways:

- Document insulin generic and brand name AND the concentration. Many new insulin products are available in different concentrations, increasing the risk for error.
- Ensure patients started on the new heart failure medication sacubitril/valsartan (Entresto) in the hospital know to stop taking their home ACE inhibitor (enalapril, lisinopril, etc.) or ARB (losartan, valsartan, etc.).
- The same inhaler medication may be available in different types of inhalers, increasing the risk of error. Document generic and entire brand name, which may include two different names, such as Advair Diskus.

Link: <https://library.amsn.org/amsn/sessions/3220/view>

References:

ISMP Guidelines for Optimizing Safe Subcutaneous Insulin Use in Adults. 2017

NPJ Prim Care Respir Med 2016;26:16017.

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