

Still waters run deep: The rise of the Pharmacy Technician onto the wards

Anna Ventura & Duncan Long

Pharmacy Dept, Princess Alexandra Hospital, Brisbane, Australia

Background

The subacute inpatient setting presents unique opportunities for pharmacy services. Activities such as advanced pharmacist consultation, education, functional assessments (e.g. self-medication trials) and comprehensive medication rationalization help distinguish such services. In this setting, pharmacists and pharmacy technicians can collaborate on tasks at the ward level to increase the capacity and productivity of the pharmacy service.

Description

The role of an advance scope pharmacy technician in a geriatric and rehabilitation unit (GARU) is to contribute to patient care including improving pharmacist time for clinical activities, and to reduce medication costs.

Action

A three-day a week ward-based technician position was conducted over a period of 6 months.

Targeted nurse education and stream-lined management of ward imprest was employed to reduce cost of medication wastage.

Collaboration with pharmacists and nurses for the timely preparation of discharge and weekend leave medication improved efficiencies allowing the pharmacist greater opportunity for clinical activities.

Functional assessment of rehabilitating patients (especially post stroke) was greatly enhanced by early and proactive provision of self-medication trials.

Other KPIs monitoring for the success of the role included number of pharmacist interventions, increase in influenza vaccination consenting and growth of outpatient activity-based funding.

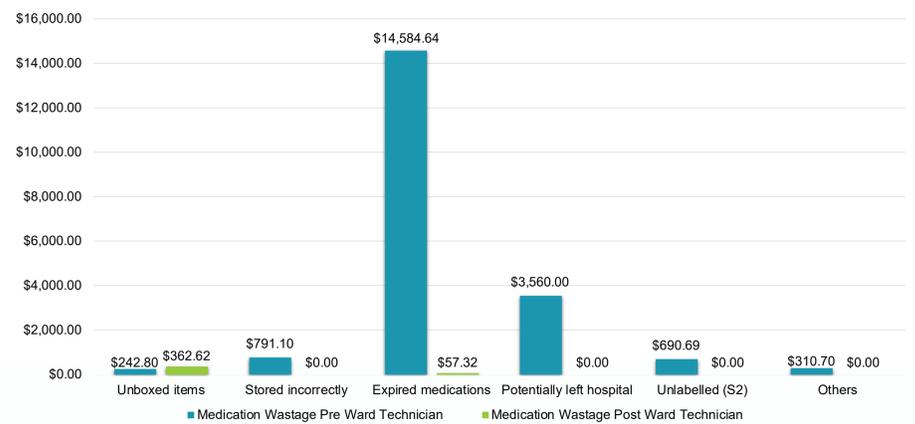
Implications

This trial of service was able to show immediate impact on patient care and medication costs by the re-allocation of the pharmacy technician out of the dispensary and into the wards. It is anticipated that greater gains can be seen upon expansion of the role into 5 days a week.

Evaluation

- A projected \$20,000 pa was saved from reduction of medication wastage

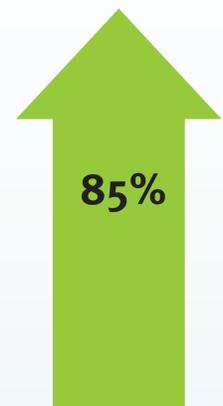
Medication Wastage Before and After Implementation of Ward Technician



- Increase in Pharmacist Clinical Interventions and Increase in Influenza Vaccination Rates



Pharmacist Clinical Interventions



Influenza Vaccination

- Improved accuracy of ADR recording onto discharge letters

Accuracy of ADR recording onto discharge letters



- Increased capacity for pharmacist to generate activity-based funding in the outpatient Memory clinic. Increased by \$800-1600/week
- 100% of stroke rehab patients undertook self-medication assessment during implementation