

Factors that Contribute to Medication Errors in the Philippine Heart Center (2010)

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Background of the Study: Medication administration to patients is a part of clinical nursing practice with high risk of errors occurrence. The causing factors of medication errors are either individual or systemic. Factors that relate specifically to nurses, such as patient acuity and nursing workload, the distractions and interruptions that can occur during medication administration, the complexity of some medication calculations and administration methods, and the failure of nurses to adhere to policies or guidelines all contribute to adverse events that compromise patient safety.

Objective: To assess the diversity and abundance of individual and organizational factors that contribute to the occurrence of medication errors in the clinical nursing practice.

Methods: A descriptive-correlation research design was used to evaluate the occurrence of medication errors encountered in the different nursing units of the hospital. The study utilized convenience sampling and total enumeration of nurses in the institution. Spearman's Rank, Kruskal-Wallis and Mann-Whitney U-test were used to analyze all factors pertaining to medication errors. Research considered deficiencies resulting from unsafe practices by healthcare professionals including the omission of re-check of the medication order by doctor and lack of communication between the primary care and secondary care services.

Results: Study showed that area of assignment and working overtime are associated with medication errors (*p-value of 0.042 and 0.043, respectively*). Errors are found in prescribing (90.8%), order processing (55.7%), dispensing (92.5%), and administering (85.4%). Correlation of age (*p-value 0.479*), work experience (*p-value 0.776*), working hours (*p-value 0.040*), workload (*p-value 0.72*) with medication error revealed significant *p-value of ≤ 0.05* . Increased workload, interruptions or distractions, high patient to nurse ratio, increased workload are the leading factors that influence the occurrence of medication errors. The elimination of medication errors of course is difficult to be successful, but the reduction of their frequency remains still achievable.