

Abstract

Problem: Although there are many processes and professionals involved in assuring that the ‘right’ patient receives the ‘right’ medication at the ‘right’ time, most medication use systems rely on the human efforts of a nurse to ensure that medications are administered correctly and safely. These well-intentioned efforts are often influenced by the fact that medication administration takes place within a turbulent work environment that impacts the nurse’s ability to ensure safe and accurate medication administration.

Distractions/interruptions are latent failures, which under the right set of conditions, contribute to medication administration errors. The literature supports the association and perceptions of distractions and interruptions on medication administration errors. Mayo & Duncan, (2004) found that distractions were perceived by nurses as a top contributor to medication errors. Nurse clinicians at the Johns Hopkins Hospital (JHH) perceive distractions/interruptions as barriers to completing the five medication rights just prior to medication administration. Grayson, et al., (2005) discovered that “staff was more likely to be distracted in the 30 minutes preceding medical errors, 91 percent of which related to medication administration” (p. 3). Although the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) and the Institute of Medicine (IOM) have identified the importance of the nurses’ work environment in improving the safety and quality of health care, the IOM reported that “strategies for reducing interruptions and distractions in nursing settings have not been well developed” (Page, 2004, p. 261).

Purpose: Understand how changes within the nurses work environment influence actual and perceived distractions and interruptions during medication administration.

Design: The proposed study is a descriptive pre and post evaluation design..

Setting: The study will take place on the adolescent medical-surgical inpatient unit of the Johns Hopkins Hospital Children’s Center.

Participants: A purposive sample of 50 hospital employed nurse clinicians that work on the adolescent unit will be invited to voluntarily participate in this study.

Importance of the research: This study addresses the recommendations of many expert safety organizations to examine and redesign the nurses work environment to improve patient safety. This study will also address the lack of pediatric specific medication error risk reduction strategies. (Miller, Robinson, Lumboski, Rinke, & Pronovost, 2007)