

Research Project

Name of Project

Identifying the right patient: Nurse and patient perspectives on how to verify patient identity during medication administration

Research Team

Ms. Teresa Kelly, Ms. Cath Roper, Associate Professor Steve Elsom, Dr Cadeyrn Gaskin

Funding Body

Australian College Mental Health Nurses' and Bristol Myers Squibb Research Grant in 2007

Project Summary

Central to the safe practice of medication administration are the “five rights”– giving the right drug, in the right dose, to the right patient, via the right route, at the right time. The one area in which psychiatric nurses’ application of these five cardinal rules differs from nursing practice in non-psychiatric settings is in the ways of identifying “right patient.” In non-psychiatric inpatient settings such as medical and surgical units, the use of identification aids such as wristbands are common. In most Victorian psychiatric inpatient units, however, identification aids are not used. Anecdotally, consumers dislike some methods of patient identification, such as wearing wrist bands, and some nurses perceive consumer’s rights are infringed through wearing such personal identifiers.

The aim of this exploratory study is to examine ways in which psychiatric nurses could correctly identify patients during routine medication administration to identify ways of verifying "right patient" that promote medication safety and are acceptable to both consumers and nurses. The participants will be mental health consumers who have had prior experience as recipients of psychiatric inpatient medication administration, and psychiatric nurses who currently work in psychiatric inpatient units. This study will employ focus groups to explore mental health consumers’ and psychiatric nurses’ experiences of patient identification during routine psychiatric inpatient medication administration, and their opinions of, and preferences for, different ways of verifying "right patient" during routine medication administration.

Progress

The University of Melbourne Health Sciences Human Ethics Sub-Committee approved the project on 21 January 2008

Data collection was completed in August 2008

Data analysis was completed in February 2009

Write up of research findings is currently underway.

Summary of Findings

Publications