

# Inpatient electronic prescribing – how involved are inpatients with their medication?

C Lubrant<sup>1</sup>, \*S Jheeta<sup>1</sup>, S Garfield<sup>1,2</sup> and B D Franklin<sup>1,2</sup>

Centre for Medication Safety and Service Quality, Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust, London, UK  
The Department of Practice and Policy, UCL School of Pharmacy, London, UK

\*Corresponding author: seetal.jheeta@imperial.nhs.uk

## Background



It has been suggested that greater patient involvement with medication may help improve medication safety.

However, it is not known to what extent electronic prescribing (EP) may support inpatient involvement in the UK hospital setting.

EP systems could potentially create a barrier to patient involvement if patients have reduced access to their medication records.



Conversely, EP could facilitate the production of patient-specific interfaces which could be used to support increased patient involvement in their care.

## We aimed to:

1. Identify whether EP systems commercially available in England have features which support inpatient access and interaction with their electronic medication record.

2. Explore the extent to which inpatients are supported to interact with EP systems in a sample of English hospitals.

## Methods

- Websites of commercially available EP systems used in England were accessed and searched to identify any features which could support inpatient access or interaction with their electronic medication record.
- Thirteen hospital trusts in England with well-established inpatient EP systems were identified. A relevant pharmacist was contacted by e-mail or telephone at each and asked a series of open questions about their experiences and opportunities for inpatient interactions with their EP system.

### Topics explored:

- Opportunity for patient access to EP system
- Patient friendly interfaces
- EP support for self-administration of medication
- Provision of medication information to patients

Notes were taken and data summarised descriptively. Ethical approval was not required.

## Results

### 1. Do commercially available EP systems support inpatient interaction?

Fourteen commercial EP systems were identified. Only one website referred to possible inpatient involvement; this was via an 'interactive patient console' which could provide access to medical information, educational materials and allowed communication with healthcare professionals. This required additional hardware such as televisions, microphones and keyboards.



### 2. Do hospitals using EP systems support inpatient interaction?

Nine (69%) of thirteen trusts responded to our survey. None reported that inpatients were able to access or interact directly with their electronic medication record, although two reported that their system had a relatively 'patient friendly' medication record screen which could be shown to the patient by the healthcare professional if requested. Seven reported that print-outs of inpatient medication were possible if requested by the patient but these were not used routinely.

Self-administration of medication was reported to be rarely used; four trusts could provide a paper record of medication to any self-administering patients as patients were unable to access their electronic medication record.



## Discussion and conclusion



There is potential for inpatients to view 'patient-friendly' screens with some systems although these are not routinely used. This may partly be due to the additional hardware required to support more widespread use.

Although there is a shift towards paperless systems, currently the most common way to provide patients with information about their prescribed medication is to print out this information.

This exploratory study suggests that inpatient EP systems are not designed to accommodate patient access and interaction.

Greater patient involvement with medication may help improve medication safety in the hospital setting, therefore EP suppliers and healthcare providers should consider how inpatients could best be involved in their medication with EP systems.