

Health & Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee
13 March 2013 @ 6:15pm

Mr David Allison, Chief Executive

Medicines Management

1.0 Background

Medicines management in hospitals encompasses the entire way that medicines are selected, procured, delivered, prescribed, administered and reviewed to optimise the contribution that medicines make to producing informed and desired outcomes of patient care.

Although the Chief Pharmacist in the Trust is accountable for the systems and processes to facilitate good medicines management, delivery requires strong collaboration with the Medical Director and Director of Nursing as doctors, pharmacists and nurses are all key players in the way medicines are used in a hospital, alongside a range of other healthcare professionals who may prescribe or administer medicines as a part of their role.

In January 2012, a CQC (Care Quality Commission) report stated that there were moderate concerns with medicines storage at Wirral University Teaching Hospital in light of information received following an audit of storage across the Trust. The medicines storage facilities had been developed as part of the original hospital build in 1982 and, unlike in many more modern hospitals, there were not bespoke areas where medicines were selected and prepared on most wards.

In April 2012, the Trust received an unannounced CQC inspection. The rating was reduced to minor concerns following their visit during which they noted improvements in the storage of medicines as a result of both behavioural changes and a significant on-going programme of investment in storage facilities at ward level. They did observe issues with the way medicines were reconciled when patients are admitted to the Trust and an over reliance on the pharmacy service to ensure that this is completed properly (medicines reconciliation is the process by which a medicines history is taken and then the correct medicines are prescribed on admission). They also identified that the bedside lockers used to store patient medicines were not fit for purpose.

In September 2012 a further unannounced CQC inspection occurred. Following the inspection the Trust was found to be fully compliant with the medicines management standard.

2.0 Programme of Work

A range of work has been undertaken to improve the way medicines are managed in the Trust.

2.1 Medicines Storage

- Over £500,000k has been invested to provide a medicines storage room on every ward with British regulation compliant medicines and controlled drug cupboards.
- Over £150,000k has been invested in new bedside lockers to support medicines administration by nurses and self-administration by patients where appropriate.
- Ward stock lists have been reviewed to separate medicines types and cupboards are organised and labelled alphabetically to support healthcare professionals to find the medicine they need.
- Pharmacy support staff now put away medicines on many of the Trust wards to release nurses to spend more time on patient care.
- A programme of education relating to medicines storage was delivered to nursing and healthcare workers at ward level.
- Pharmacy support staff now undertake unannounced medicines spot checks and check that fridge temperatures are regularly monitored.
- Checklists were introduced for ward sisters and monthly matron spot checks occur, and the results are monitored at the Trust Governance Committee.
- A range of publicity materials were developed - newsletters, flyers, etc which highlighted key issues and actions required.

2.2 Medicines Reconciliation

- A lead consultant was nominated to champion medicines reconciliation.
- Updated documentation was launched following feedback and an intensive period of education occurred at all junior doctor handover, to emphasise the importance of completing the paperwork appropriately.
- Medicines reconciliation was included in the junior doctor induction training.
- Additional pharmacy staff were placed on the admission area of the Trust to support prescribing.
- Pharmacy staff are now training 5th year medical students to undertake accurate medicines reconciliation.

2.3 Other Actions

- Additional medicines management training is being delivered by pharmacy staff on a range of topics.
- A small pilot of self-medication is occurring and will be extended in 2013.
- Funding for a Medicines Management Nurse has been approved to provide support to the medicines management agenda and to support the roll-out of self-medication in the Trust. It is hoped that an appointment will be made early in 2013.
- The way medicines are being administered is under review, to promote the management of medicines at the bedside where the nursing staff can spend more time with patients as they administer medicines.
- The Pharmacy obtained a Wholesaler Dealer's Licence in 2012; this allows the Trust to supply medicines to other organisations but also provides assurance regarding the medicines procurement and distribution services in the Trust.
- A new clinical guidance website is in development which, once live, will provide additional support for prescribers in one easy to find location.
- A pharmacy prescription tracker has been developed to support effective and safe discharge.

- Pharmacy staffing at the weekend and out of hours has been reviewed to provide additional cover at these times.
- The Trust resuscitation boxes have been redesigned to ensure that fluids needed in this situation are secured within a box and not left loose on resuscitation trolleys.
- Some areas of work will require a change in electronic prescribing system utilised in the Trust. The prescribing element of the new Cerner Millennium system has been delayed and the Trust is currently reviewing its options in light of this delay.

3.0 Next Steps

The Trust has made significant progress with the way medicines are stored and handled, but is not complacent and has a programme of work on-going to further improve and extend good practice in line with its policies and procedures.

