



**Service Priorities and Programmes**  
**Electronic Presentations**

**Convention ID:** 492

**Submitting author:** Miss Angela Chung Yan CHAU

**Post title:** Pharmacist, NDH, NTEC

**Small but smart improvements to medication labels to enhance medication safety**

*Chau CYA (1), Chan KYM (1), Chan SHJ (1), Lim WL (1), Chen SCS (1)  
(1) Department of Pharmacy, North District Hospital*

**Keywords:**

medication labels  
improvements

**Introduction**

Provision of drug information to healthcare professionals is pivotal to the enhance medication safety in the hospital. Information on reconstitution, diluents, rate of infusion and use before dates are essential to ensure safe and effective use of drug but are not available on the corporate dispensing labels.

Look alike and sound alike drug names, similar packaging and unsafe storage practices may contribute to incorrect drug selection in pharmacy or wards hence leading to medication incidents.

**Objectives**

- To prevent inadvertent administration of drugs via iv bolus for drugs requiring iv infusion
- To enhance efficiency and accuracy in preparing the use before labels for reconstituted antibiotics syrups
- To incorporate some safety enhancements in the bin-shelf drug labels in pharmacy and wards

**Methodology**

Auxiliary label - Dilution labels drugs requiring IV infusion

IV infusion instead of IV bolus is recommended for administration of some antibiotics such as Vancomycin, Clindamycin and Amikacin. Auxiliary labels specifying reconstitution method, dilution method and infusion rate are affixed to dispensing bags during dispensing to serves as a reminder to nurses during administration.

Auxiliary label - Expiry date labels for reconstituted antibiotics

Use before dates of reconstituted antibiotics were calculated manually in the past.

Records of antibiotics reconstitution are also written manually in a dedicated logbook.

To ensure accuracy of the use before dates for the reconstituted antibiotics and to enhance record keeping, a simple software using MS Excel has been developed automatically calculates the use date, indicates if refrigeration is required and prepare a record for traceability

Bin-shelf labels

Databases have been developed to print the bin-shelf drug labels for pharmacy and

wards. Drugs with different strengths are highlighted with different colours to provide a visual cue to staff to check drug strength. Tallman lettering is used to highlight the dissimilarity in look alike drug names. Special warnings for certain classes of medications are incorporated to enhance staff alertness.

### **Result**

The auxiliary labels are well received by staff as indicated in an evaluation survey. The redesign of drug labels with some safety enhancements is a small but significant step towards medication safety.