Service Priorities and Programmes

Electronic Presentations

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Think Left, Think Right

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Introduction

The current Clinical Management System does not highlight the laterality of medications being applied to paired organs such as eye drops. The uniform, monotonous layout of the prescription page and lack of an eye-catching discrimination between medications intended for two separate eyes often create undesirable errors in an overloaded eye clinic.

Objectives

To enhance patient safety and awareness of clinicians by incorporating simple colour coding system in prescribing ocular medications.

Methodology

Over the period of three days, our eye care assistants were given highlighters in orange, green and yellow and were instructed to highlight eyedrops intended for left eye, right eye or both respectively on the first five to ten printout prescriptions during the general clinics. Six residents participated in the study and were encouraged to double check their highlighted prescriptions before signing their signatures. all prescriptions processed in the above fashion were collected for analysis Verbal feedbacks from both eye care assistants and the residents were collected. They are asked to rate the usefulness in terms of enhancing patient and medication safety.

Result

During the study period, 50 patients had their prescriptions highlighted according to the instructions. There was no prescription error. All prescriptions were correctly highlighted by our eye care assistants before signage by the residents. All residents reported positive feedback on the usefulness of this colour coding system. They agreed with the aid of different colours on the prescription sheet, it has become easier for them to double check the prescribed items and recognize any errors before distributing to the patients. The effect is more prominent when patients require nultiple eye-drops or ointments. Eye care assistants participating in this study are experienced staff in our clinic. They pointed out that the purpose of this highlighting is well intended however highlighting each prescription sheet with three different highlighters created

additional workload and potentials for errors. They reported spending more time in processing such a prescription than usual. When asked if they believe such system, if incorporated into the Clinical Management System in the future, would help benefit patient safety and raise clinician awareness while eliminating the extra workload for eye care assistants and potentials for human errors, both groups responded positively.