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Expansion of experiential learning opportunities through medication reconciliation participation

Jane M. Gervasio, Julie M. Koehler, Kevin M. Tuohy, Julie L. Williams, Mary H. Andritz

Background: The JCAHO-mandated medication reconciliation (MR) process is an integral part of the medication continuity between pre-admission, admission and discharge from the hospital. The responsibility for reconciling medications may be accomplished by pharmacists, nurses and physicians. Incorporating pharmacy students into this interdisciplinary healthcare team may support both student learning and the mission of the healthcare organization. The purpose of this study is to evaluate the contribution of pharmacy students in the MR process.

Methods: Four students were each assigned to a 4-week MR rotation. Students were assigned to a specific unit weekly; each unit had a decentral pharmacist to oversee the students activities. Students were responsible for conducting patient interviews and follow-up with doctors offices, pharmacies and outside care facilities to ensure complete and accurate medication histories. Students reconciled the medication histories with the medications the patients were receiving in the hospital. When discrepancies were noted, the students contacted physicians either orally or via written note in the progress section of patients charts.

Results: Over an 8-week period, two rotation cycles, 4,478 patients were admitted to the hospital requiring MR. During that time period, 3427 (77%) of MRs were completed. Eight students completed 978 MRs, which accounted for 29% of the total number of completed MRs. Further data collection is ongoing as qualitative student interventions are being documented.

Conclusion: An MR-based experiential rotation allows for development of necessary skills to function as an integral member of a hospital-based healthcare team and supports the achievement of a JCAHO-mandate by the institution.