



In this Issue: New Developments in Pharmacy Service

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Medication Delivery Service: Convenience at Your Doorstep

By Ms Rebecca CHAN and Mr Kelvin WONG

Pharmacy Services Development & Transformation Team, Chief Pharmacist's Office, Cluster Services Division

In today's ever-evolving world, convenience is paramount, and in the field of healthcare is no exception. The new Medication Delivery Service (the "Service") launched in 2023 has emerged as a convenient solution for patients to receive their prescribed medications directly at their doorstep, without the need to wait at the pharmacies of Hospital Authority (HA) hospital or clinic after their doctor consultation.



To arrange the Service, patients simply need to provide their delivery details and pay the standard delivery fee per prescription on the HA Go mobile app. For those who would like to know more about their medications, the Service also offers a Pharmacist Medication Counselling Service, where HA pharmacists proactively contact patients through video conference or telephone to address their drug related problems and provide advice to facilitate safe and effective use of medications.



For more information,
please refer to the video:





HA has partnered with a third-party logistics provider to ensure the secure and timely delivery of medications. Medications dispensed by HA pharmacies are collected and carefully transported using air-conditioned vehicles, equipped with portable refrigerators and temperature loggers, to ensure the medications are stored under appropriate conditions during delivery.

To ensure that the right medications reach the right patients, HA has implemented a smart verification mechanism with the scanning of the QR code in the HA Go mobile app to verify patient identity and match it with the corresponding medication package(s). Every step of the delivery journey, from collection to last-mile delivery, requires scanning each medication package as part of the track and trace process. By employing this robust approach, it minimizes the risk of medication errors and enhances patient safety.

The Medication Delivery Service and the Medication Counselling Service by Telepharmacy have enhanced the quality of patient care. As the demand for accessible pharmaceutical care services continues to rise, the Service will continue to evolve and explore new service models such as collaboration with community partners to provide patient counselling and medication collection service to enhance the patient experience further.



Editorial Comments

The Medication Delivery Service by HA is a game-changer, providing unparalleled convenience to patients. By delivering prescribed medications right to their doorstep, patients can enjoy unprecedented ease and accessibility. Furthermore, Pharmacist Medication Counselling Service has facilitated the safe and effective use of medications.

Dr Venus SIU, Chief Manager (Clinical Effectiveness & Technology Management), HAHO

The Robot for Medication Delivery

By Ms Lucia CHAN¹, Mr Alan NG¹, Ms Pauline CHU²

Department of Pharmacy, ¹Tin Shui Wai Hospital, ²Tuen Mun Hospital

Tin Shui Wai Hospital (TSWH) took the lead to employ technology within medication management process. “順順, Harry — the Pharmacy Porter” joined our team since September 2021; aiming to ensure timely medication delivery and enhance efficiency in medication administration, as well as patient discharge.

“Harry” delivers medication from pharmacy to various wards in a single trip while nurses return unused medication and documents back to pharmacy. A number of tailor-made features have been introduced to meet our operational needs: Pharmacy staff uses integrated QR code scanner to capture delivery records; which enable online data retrieval and analysis. A yellow flashing light has been installed to alert the passage of “Harry” on its calibrated routes. On arrival at delivery points, there are built-in audibly speakers to notify staff and the lockable drawers can only be opened at the designated locations by nursing staff using a passcode.



The implementation of “Harry” has improved the accuracy and safety of medication delivery between pharmacy and wards. All medications are tracked and traced, reducing time for pharmacy and nursing staff in chasing the whereabouts of medications, so that clinical staff can focus on patient care. On average, “Harry” carries 8 rounds of delivery per day, the saved supporting manpower was redirected to strengthen other portering tasks such as escorting patients and delivering specimens.

Editorial Comments

Robots can automate routine tasks such as delivering medication or supplies, thereby freeing up healthcare staff to focus on more complex and critical tasks. It is important to consider the opportunities and challenges when integrating robots into hospital settings, and to carefully assess each use case to enhance efficiency, accuracy and patient care in a hospital.

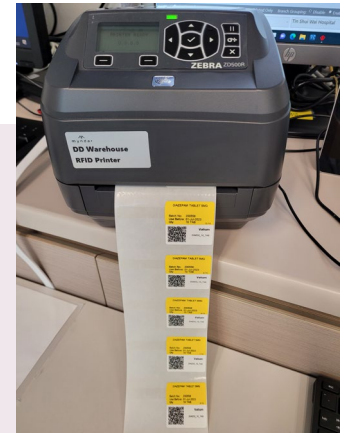
Dr Joanna PANG, Chief Medical Informatics Officer, HAHO

Implementation of RFID system in Dangerous Drug Management in Tin Shui Wai Hospital

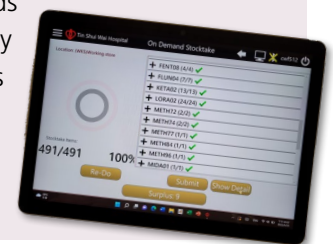
By Mr Simon CHAN¹, Mr Alan NG¹, Ms Pauline CHU²

Department of Pharmacy, ¹Tin Shui Wai Hospital, ²Tuen Mun Hospital

All dangerous drugs (DD) should be routinely examined at least once monthly. In consideration of the large volume of dangerous drugs handled by pharmacy, the Hospital Authority requires the dangerous drug stock checking in pharmacy to be performed by pharmacist at least once weekly, which is typically labour-intensive and time-consuming. In Tin Shui Wai Hospital (TSWH), Radio-frequency identification Technology (RFID) has been applied to improve the efficiency of DD stock inspection since December 2021.



Upon the receipt of a DD item from supplier, unique RFID label which contains the drug identity, batch number and expiry date would be generated and affixed to the outside package of the DD stock item. When a RFID sensor reads through the RFID Tagged drug items, the system will automatically detect its presence and record corresponding information. It helps reduce the pharmacist time on DD stock check by at least 30%. More pharmacist time can be spent on clinical service and patient care in return.



The implementation of this RFID Management System also assists pharmacy to handle various transactions of DD with wards. By RFID scanning, the quantity and identity of DD to be supplied to wards can be real-time recorded. After pharmacist counter-checking the system data against the requisition, this transaction data would then be stored in the RFID Management System and are readily traceable if needed, e.g. Drug recall. This "track-and-trace" ability can significantly improve the medication safety.



In future, we hope that pharmaceutical companies could provide RFID-enabled products with all the medication data embedded in the original package. This could greatly enhance the overall medication management.

Editorial Comments

The advance in technology facilitates the healthcare providers in their various daily practice. Among all, our colleagues from Tin Shui Wai Hospital have a nice demonstration on utilizing the RFID in dangerous drug management which has proven improvement in both the efficiency and patient safety.

Dr Carmen CHAN, Deputy Service Director (Quality & Standards), HKWC

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