

CASE STUDY

Paper Digital: Which Medication Incident Reporting Method Is Most Efficient and Offers Pharmacists the Most Benefits?


BACKGROUND

Reporting medication incidents and near-miss events is critical for pharmacies in order to identify process gaps and proactively make improvements that enhance patient safety. Pharmacies typically use either paper or digital platforms to complete their reporting requirements.

Since 2012, Meaghers Pharmacy, a chain of family-run, community-based pharmacies with nine locations across Dublin, Ireland has been using Pharmapod to report medication incidents and near-miss events.

THE APPROACH



To understand the benefits of using the Pharmapod digital reporting platform versus paper reporting, two Meaghers pharmacy locations **tracked all medication errors and near-miss events on paper and in Pharmapod for a one-month period** (a total of 63 incidents were reported).

Pharmacy staff recorded the length of time it took to complete both paper-based and digital reports and were asked to **share their thoughts on the pros and cons of both reporting methods.** 



“What is a near-miss one day can easily be a dispensing error in the future and this is what we want to prevent. We take the learnings from our near misses, determine the root cause, and take action to prevent a similar incident from occurring again. This might be a simple action such as separating two items on a shelf.”


THE RESULTS Paper Digital: Time Spent Reporting

NEAR-MISS EVENTS

PHARMACY 1		PHARMACY 2	
Events reported: 27		Events reported: 34	
Average time to report			
 Paper: 3 minutes 42 seconds			Paper: 2 minutes 48 seconds
 Digital: 3 minutes 36 seconds			Digital: 2 minutes 27 seconds

MEDICATION INCIDENTS

PHARMACY 1		PHARMACY 2	
Events reported: 1		Events reported: 1	
Average time to report			
Paper: 5 minutes 5 seconds			Paper: 6 minutes 22 seconds 
Digital: 6 minutes 11 seconds			Digital: 4 minutes 39 seconds 








Though the time savings were minimal, pharmacy staff felt reporting in Pharmapod offered a number of critical advantages compared to paper reporting. 












We will never return to a paper-based system. I find Pharmapod so easy to navigate and their support team is brilliant.”

THE RESULTS Paper Digital: Pros and Cons

Paper

-  Don't need to wait for free computer
-  Paper easily misplaced or lost
-  Handwriting often illegible making it difficult for supervising staff to review
-  Data cannot be collated and analyzed to identify trends and make proactive improvements
-  Filing and storage consumes valuable space in the pharmacy
-  Difficult to retrieve or generate a report
-  Very difficult to determine status of reports and if follow-up is required

Pharmapod

-  Very easy to analyze data, identify trends and repeated mistakes to make improvements
-  Able to quickly share findings with staff and other dispensaries so all locations can make required changes if necessary
-  Reports can be viewed remotely
-  System form is comprehensive to ensure proper context is provided around near-miss or incident so the pharmacy can learn from it
-  Easy to check status of reports to determine if follow-up actions are required
-  Form prompts the user to help ensure all necessary details and information is included and reports are PSI compliant
-  All staff have their own login, so multiple staff members can contribute to report
-  Everything stored in one location
-  When busy, it's sometimes easier to jot down notes on paper

Establishing a Culture of Safety

Pharmacy staff also feel reporting in Pharmapod has helped establish a 'Just Culture' where staff are not afraid to report errors or near-miss events, and instead the focus is on learning and making process improvements.

“Who caused the error or near-miss is never identified on any report, rather **the focus is always on what has happened and what we can do to prevent it.** Our staff understand the importance and use of an error reporting system and know that it's not to call out someone for causing one.”

“**I don't feel it's a blame game situation,** talking about them [errors] with the team helps make them feel a part of the dispensing process and **inspires them to be more careful dispensing in the future.**”

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