

August 19, 2011

## Pharmacist Reduces Medication Discrepancies for Elderly Patients, Study Shows

---

An internal medicine team that included a pharmacist had the lowest average medication discrepancies per patient discharged from a hospital when compared with hospitalists and internal medicine teams that did not utilize pharmacists, according to an August 2011 study in *The American Journal of Geriatric Pharmacotherapy*.<sup>1</sup>

The average number of medication discrepancies per patient was 6.27 when treated by an internal medicine team that included a pharmacist. Hospitalists and an internal medicine team that did not include pharmacists had 9.68 and 11.33 medication discrepancies per patient, respectively. Pharmacists at the hospital studied participate in internal medicine patient rounds and help reconcile medications.

"Pharmacists who work with patient care teams are in a prime position to facilitate seamless care by reducing medication discrepancies and errors that occur during health care transition," the study found.

This study was based on a retrospective review of hospital discharge medication regimens for 200 patients ages 65 and older from August 2008 to December 2009. The medication regimens were obtained from three lists that included physician discharge summaries, discharge orders, and nursing discharge lists.

An abstract of the study is available [here](#).

1. Stitt DM, Elliott DP, Thompson SN. Medication discrepancies identified at time of hospital discharge in a geriatric population. *Am J Geriatr Pharmacother*. 2011; 9:234-40.

---

To View ASHP's Policy Alert Archive click <http://www.ashp.org/policy-alert>.

Questions about ASHP Health Policy Alerts can be directed to Lisa Daigle, policy analyst, at (301) 664-8651 or [ldaigle@ashp.org](mailto:ldaigle@ashp.org).

ASHP Health Policy Alerts are synopses of new studies highlighting the medication-use process in health care, especially studies assessing contemporary pharmacists' role in improving medication-use outcomes. The American Society of Health-System Pharmacists encourages recipients to keep a copy of this synopsis for future reference.

