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Clinical pharmacist reduces drug-related hospital readmissions, costs, study shows

A clinical pharmacist performing medication therapy management (MTM) services for patients ages 80 and older on a hospital ward reduced readmissions and lowered patient costs, according to a study in the May 11, 2009, *Archives of Internal Medicine*.¹

Among patients receiving care from a clinical pharmacist, all hospital visits fell by 16%, emergency department visits were reduced by 47%, and drug-related readmissions dropped by 80%. After including intervention costs, the costs per patient were \$230 lower for those patients receiving the pharmacist's care than for patients receiving usual care from physicians and nurses.

The randomized, controlled study of 368 patients (182 patients in the intervention group and 186 patients in the control group) was conducted at a university hospital in Sweden. Patients were recruited into the study from October 1, 2005, to June 30, 2006, and were monitored over 12 months.

A clinical pharmacist working at 0.5 full-time equivalent for nine months provided intervention group patients with the following typical MTM services: creating a comprehensive medication list for patients upon admission to the emergency department; reviewing patients' medications and recommending changes to patients' physicians as to the types of medications used, medication dosages, and patient monitoring needs; educating patients on their medications; and counseling patients on their medications upon discharge.

Patients in the control group received usual care that was similar, but less extensive, than the care provided for intervention group patients, which was performed by physicians and nurses.

The study abstract is available at <http://archinte.ama-assn.org/cgi/content/short/169/9/894>

1. Gillespie U, Alassaad A, Henrohn D et al. A comprehensive pharmacist intervention to reduce morbidity in patients 80 years or older: a randomized controlled trial. *Arch Intern Med*. 2009; 169:894-900.

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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.



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