

Medication Errors and Cellphone use in Hospitals

Background

Medication errors are among the most common medical errors occurring in Hospitals, harming at least 1.5 millions people yearly; 96% of these errors are preventable.

Interruptions and distractions interfere or affect the ability of people to remember to do something later or carry out a task that is intended for the future

(Grissinger M., 2015).

In a survey of more than 700 nurses from six different health care settings, 97.7% said they owned a smartphone, 92.7% responded carrying their smartphones at work and 84.8% reported using their cellphones during work

(Flynn, G. et al., 2018).

With each interruption the risk for medication error increases 12.7 %. The risk for an adverse medication error occurring doubles when nurses are interrupted 4 times and that number triples if they are interrupted 6 times.

(Grissinger M., 2015).



Averting someone's focus elsewhere increases the risk for error, because stress evolves from the distractions causing one to become mentally exhausted which can result in omissions, mistakes, or lapses

(Grissinger M., 2015).

A systematic review revealed that 78.1% of nurses use the mobile devices for personal purposes during work hours and almost half reported having been distracted by using the mobile device

(Fiorinelli et al., 2021).

3.4 to 5.9 interruptions an hour!

Discussion

It is likely that cellphone use in hospitals cause medications errors. More research is needed to establish a direct correlation between cell phone use and medication errors.

Citations

Fiorinelli, M., Di Mario, S., Surace, A., Mattei, M., Russo, C., Villa, G., Dionisi, S., Di Simone, E., Giannetta, N., & Di Muzio, M. (2021). Smartphone distraction during nursing care: Systematic literature review. *Applied nursing research* : ANR, 58, 151405. <https://doi-org.ez-proxy.methodist.edu/10.1016/j.apnr.2021.151405>

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McBride, D., LeVasseur, S. A., & Li, D. (2015). Nursing Performance and Mobile Phone Use: Are Nurses Aware of Their Performance Decrements?. *JMIR human factors*, 2(1), e6. <https://doi.org/10.2196/humanfactors.4070>