

VITAL INFORMATION

Medication Charts - Not just a list of Medications!!

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A simple list of medications is a snapshot of what medications a patient / resident is taking 'today.' It gives no insight as to what happened yesterday, last month or three or more months ago. And that can be of vital importance to those who need to assess 'the why,' 'what for,' the 'when' and 'how much' which a well presented and documented medication history can reveal.

A **COMPACT** medication chart tells a valuable story .

The resident's doctor, a medical locum, a specialist, the accredited pharmacist doing a medication review, the clinical nurse and others need to have far more than a simple daily list to reveal the story of what is happening to an individual's 'health' in relation to medications.

COMPACT medication charts Aged Care use have evolved with the input of many experienced health professionals to create a document which records the broad range of information required for optimal medication use and for maximum safety for residents. It is continually evaluated and upgraded consistent with the latest legal and 'best practice' requirements.

Simple facts such as age, weight and allergies more often than do not appear on a simple signing sheet for a list of 'today's medications.' A medication chart also attracts other necessary information to one central place for efficient documentation including entitlement numbers (PBS / Medicare / DVA / Safety Net / etc), residents room number, photo, special considerations (are medications crushed?, is the person a diet controlled diabetic?, when was use of the pacemaker commenced?), who is the residents doctor, supplying pharmacist, when were vaccinations done, what name does the residents prefer to be called, etc.

More importantly it amalgamates all medications used over a period of six months and up to twelve months in many cases. To answer questions such as how many courses of antibiotics has Mrs Bloggs had for UTI's in the past six months can be easily identified from the Short Term Medication orders section: was the diuretic B commenced soon after drug X (possible cause of ankle oedema) was started? has the residents thyroid function been checked since commencing drug Y : has a reminder for

occasional checks of electrolytes been noted and done? All of these otherwise 'time consuming' (or ignored) details required for optimum use of modern medications can easily be identified with thoughtful use of a **COMPACT** medication chart. The prompts are already in place.

Documentation of precautions and safety administration of particular drug use can be readily listed under 'Medication Notes' so that staff have consistent guidelines on an ongoing basis. Special precautions can be listed under 'Medications Requiring Monitoring' for all practitioners involved with particular medications. This applies to observations / monitoring by staff and for suggested blood and other tests.

A section specifically for 'Telephone Orders' provides a process for dealing with often difficult requests and is supported with a 'prescription' which can be forwarded to the facility and included on the medication chart. A computerised system available through Medical Director will enable new single items and complete lists of current medications for individual residents to be computer generated and forwarded to the facility when new single item or whole new profiles are required. This had the added advantage for prescribers in that they always have a current list of medications, with yesterday's changes, readily available.

Pages for 'When Required' medications allow these agents to be readily identified saving valuable time; a Nurse Initiated section is included for those facilities who have Guideline for use of a limited list of R.N agents which may be required for a short period of time e.g. 24 hours. A blank back page is an ideal place for calculations of BMI's, renal function (creatinine clearance) to be made and recorded.

False economies when considering medication issues include neglecting optimal documentation of medications which may lead to disregarding important information

because it is 'too hard to retrieve' or not kept in chronological order (as single page documents tend to be), in resident files.

Consider carefully the minimal cost for optimum medication use / documentation versus minimal or apparent 'no cost' for other systems. The **COMPACT** system wins every time on professional and safety grounds and the ease of following 'what is really happening' with residents medications.

A **COMPACT** medication chart is a useful tool - not just a list of medications.

New improved medication charts now available!

The latest recommendations from the Australian Pharmaceutical Advisory Council (APAC) - 'Guidelines for Medications Management in Residential Aged Care Facilities (3rd Edition)' - have been included.

