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# Ward Medicines Assistants Everyone should have one . . .

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building a caring future

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# The road to WMAs – a 10 year journey

- ATOs supporting medicines administration
  - Significant reduction in omitted doses (published)
  - Time saving for nurses (observed)
- Six ATOs on 6 wards initially recruited on trial basis
  - Safer medicines administration
  - Medicines stock control
- Role evolved from supporting medicines administration to include ward based medicines management
- Concept of “Ward Medicines Assistant” created



**Reducing unacceptable omitted doses**  
Pharmacy Assistant supported  
medicine administration

David Campbell  
On behalf of the Omitted Doses Project Steering Group



# WMAs quickly showed to be effective

- Improved medicines administration
  - Less omitted doses
  - Errors identified before they happened
- Release nursing capacity
  - Taking on ward based medicines roles e.g. stock, storage, transfer of medicines, second check of CDs
- Support ward based pharmacy team
  - Ordering medicines, reminder charts, locker checks

JOURNAL ARTICLE

## Reducing unacceptable missed doses: pharmacy assistant-supported medicine administration FREE

Wasim Baqir , Kate Jones, William Horsley, Scott Barrett, David Fisher, Richard Copeland, David Campbell, Rosemary Stephenson

*International Journal of Pharmacy Practice*, Volume 23, Issue 5, October 2015, Pages 327–332, <https://doi.org/10.1111/ijpp.12172>

Article Text

Article info

Citation Tools

Original research

Exploring an extended role for pharmacy assistants on inpatient wards in UK hospitals: using mixed methods to develop the role of medicines assistants

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PDF

# A case for change: developing the role of a pharmacy ward assistants: more than missed doses

- Increasing demand (time and complexity) on qualified nurses – opportunity for innovative solution for medicines-related support.
- ATOs have nationally recognised qualifications and a well-established role in supporting medicines-related tasks in dispensaries.
- ATOs on wards typically ‘time-limited’ or ‘task-limited’ activities such as ward stock ordering.
- Explored the role of ward-based pharmacy assistants, demonstrating improvements in quality of care as well as reducing pressure on members of nursing staff.



# Evolution of the role

- 6 assistants on 3 wards across two sites
- Trained in-house by nursing ward teams and pharmacy technicians
  - Iterative training programme developed as we learned
  - New training programme across pharmacy and nursing for all new WMAs
- Became part ward based team as well as the pharmacy team
  - Changed working times to reflect ward work
  - Consistent pharmacy presence on the ward
  - Became recognised by ward teams as part of their team

# What does a Ward Medicines Assistant do?

- Order temporary stocks
- Assess patients own drugs once training is completed
- Administration
- Put away ward stock
- Process pharmaceutical waste and returns
- Complete Omnicell expiry checks monthly
- Perform weekly TPS order and expiry check
- Medication-refer to pharmacist/technician
- Empty red bags and put medication in the patient's lockers
- Initial preparation of IVs
- Perform 3 monthly ward stock reviews, order CDs via ward order book-Staff nurse will need to sign it
- Attend ward handover/MDT and update Nerve centre
- Prompt doctors/pharmacists to write discharge letters



- Assist in prompting patients to take their medication
- Counsel patients on new and existing medication
- Retrieve O/L drugs to assist drug round
- Act as a 2<sup>nd</sup> check for CDs & weekly CD checks
- Perform the quarterly CD review with a Technician
- Destroy Patients own CDs with a Technician
- Help with the transfer of medication to other wards/sites
- Medication reminder charts
- Screen discharge letters
- Dispense urgent medication (N/A at NSECH)
- Collect urgent medication from dispensary(N/A at NSECH)
- Nurse referral for supply on Emeds
- Perform a locker sweep

## Outcomes:

- Releasing nursing staff time to care**
- Supported/happier nursing staff**
- Safer care e.g. reduction of omitted medicines**

# Next steps for the WMA role

- Role continues to evolve e.g. 2<sup>nd</sup> check IV medicines
- Chemo medicines assistants funded by Macmillan
- Capacity released, enabling opportunities for pharmacy staff to work at top of licence:
  - Medicines reconciliation by technicians (target 70%)
  - % total inpatient prescribing done by pharmacists (target 25%)
  - Cannulation & administration of IV chemotherapy administration in ODU's
- Supporting others to adopt role (external to NHCFT)

