

Delivering patient safety by ensuring what is prescribed is what is administered to the patient.

Customer profile

Chesterfield Royal Hospital had traditionally stored drugs in medication cupboards on the wards and pharmacy staff carried out manual top ups. The Trust was looking for a way to transform the way medicines were managed on the ward. They also wanted to free up pharmacy time to focus on medicines optimisation in line with the Lord Carter report. They chose ward based pharmacy automation from Omnicell to help them achieve these aims.

Automating medicine administration on the wards

A successful business case was built around installing Omnicell Automated Medication Administration Cabinets in four key areas of the hospital:

- General surgery
- Two emergency assessment wards
- The emergency department
- A theatre store

These areas were selected as they were all large consumers of medicines with a high stock holding value. They also held a number of high risk products where picking issues could have serious consequences for patients. These areas also stored medicines that required additional safeguards or controls.



“When we installed the Omnicell system we started to realise that there was a lot more to it and that this wasn’t just a vending machine for medication. We are at a tipping point at this hospital and this is only the start of our journey. We can access so much information by using these systems - currently we are only scratching the surface.”

Martin Shepherd, Head of Medicines Management at
Chesterfield Royal Hospital NHS Foundation Trust.

Integrating ward based automation with EPMA

The Trust took the decision to integrate Omnicell's ward based systems with their EPMA system on all of the wards except the emergency department which doesn't currently have EPMA. The key driver to integrate both systems was reducing stock holding levels, improving safety and freeing up nurse time.

The decision to automate medication administration on the wards and to integrate it with EPMA led to a number of benefits including the ability to track each medication at a per patient level. The biggest benefit has been reducing stockholding levels and in giving pharmacy better control of the medication on the wards. Staff in pharmacy now have a clearer picture of what is going on in each ward with medication.

In addition, it has reduced the amount of time that pharmacy assistants spend on the ward doing manual top ups. This free time will now be used on more patient facing roles like helping to co-ordinate discharge processes to free up bed space and talking to patients about their medicines. The Trust hopes this will help improve the whole patient experience.

This new approach to administering ward based medication has been welcomed by nurses at the Trust. Automating the process has ensured that they can access the medication patients need straight away – gone are the days where they spent their time searching for drug cupboard keys or going into the medication cupboard only to discover the medication hasn't been restocked. This benefits the patient too as they are not waiting for long periods of time for the medication they need to get better or to manage their condition effectively.

The systems have also provided a safety net for the administration of medication at a time when NHS frontline staff are facing increasing pressures.

Benefits realised by automating medication administration on the wards

Pharmacy Logistics

Elimination of top-up visits

TIME SAVING: 1 hour* per top up

- Pharmacy assistant is no longer required to go to ward for this process
- Order process now only consists of auto-generating top-up list

Nursing time savings

Reduced time spent on accessing and selecting medicines

TIME SAVING: 1 minute* overall per transaction

- Nursing time returned back to patient care
- Guided restock allows for reduced errors and organised storage

Reduced time accessing, recording and reconciling controlled drugs

TIME SAVING: 15 minutes*

- Nursing time returned back to patient care
- No longer need to use keys to access CD cupboard

Next steps for the Trust

Following the successful implementation of Omnicell's ward based technology, the Trust has now included Omnicell as part of their business model. The need for ward based automation will now be automatically considered as part of the Trust's ward upgrade programme. In addition, the Trust is currently trialling Omnicell's Anywhere RN software which allows nurses to queue up medication at the cabinets while they are at the patient's bedside. This frees up even more valuable nursing time so it can be redirected back into face to face patient care. They are also piloting Omnicell's eCDR software – which enables the Trust to have electronic controlled drugs registers instead of paper records.

This is a significantly better and safer way of dealing with ward medicines. The risk to patient safety is lower as we have reduced our dependence on manual processes. It provides a safety net, reduces the risk of products being wrongly selected and near misses. Integrating the ward based systems with EPMA only strengthens that level of security. It helps us in our drive to ensure that patients receive the right medicines at the right time.

Martin Shepherd, Head of Medicines Management at
Chesterfield Royal Hospital NHS Foundation Trust.



1 hour

Pharmacy time
saving per top up

1 minute

Nursing time saved accessing/
selecting medicines

15 minutes

Nursing time saved on controlled
drugs transactions



0161 413 5333
automationsalesuk@omnicell.com
www.omnicell.co.uk

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