

AUSTRALIAN COMMISSION ON SAFETY AND QUALITY IN HEALTH CARE

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Launch of updated EMM guide to help make medication use in hospitals safer

The latest version of a guide to help hospitals implement electronic prescribing and reduce adverse drug events is being launched today by the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care.

The third edition of the guide, called *Electronic Medication Management Systems: A guide to safe implementation*, takes account of newer evidence that has come to light since the second edition was published in 2012. It also reflects the experiences of Australian hospitals that have already implemented electronic medication management (EMM) systems.

Medicines are the most common medical intervention in Australian hospitals. As many as one in nine doses of medicine administered in hospitals are associated with a clinical error.

EMM systems provide doctors, nurses and pharmacists with a safer and more efficient way of prescribing and administering medicines in hospitals. However, EMM systems that are not well planned, are not supported by appropriate governance and training, or which are not linked to other clinical information systems, can introduce new types of medication errors.

The updated EMM Guide being launched in Sydney today provides hospitals with up-to-date information so they can plan and implement EMM systems in complex hospital environments.

Medication errors can occur for a number of reasons, including human error and other factors. Errors can occur at various stages along the medicines management pathway – starting with the point at which a prescription is written, through to dispensing and the way in which the medicine is administered to or taken by patients.

Improving medication safety is a key focus of the Commission's work. The use of EMM for ordering medicines has been cited as the most promising application of information technology to help reduce serious medication errors. Automating medication ordering processes produces standardised, legible, complete orders. Combining EMM with clinical decision-support systems can further reduce medication errors.

This updated third edition of the Guide has been informed by a review of the second edition, recent international literature, the experiences of Australian EMM system implementation sites and stakeholder consultation. It incorporates feedback from hospitals, and from states and territories that have implemented or are implementing EMM systems since the second edition of the guide.

Electronic Medication Management Systems: A guide to safe implementation includes guidance on scoping, system selection, configuration, implementation, training and ongoing operation that all need to be considered when planning and implementing a safe EMM system.

The guide will be available on the Commission's website on Friday. Contact the Comms team for an advance copy.

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Interview opportunities

Dr Andrew Hugman (Clinical Lead, eHealth and Medication Safety) and Professor Anne Duggan, (Senior Medical Advisor, Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care) are available for interview.

About the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care

The Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care is an Australian Government agency that leads and coordinates national improvements in the safety and quality of health care based on the best available evidence. The Commission works in partnership with the Australian Government, state and territory governments and the private sector to achieve a safe and high-quality, sustainable health system. In doing so, the Commission also works closely with patients, carers, clinicians, managers, policymakers and healthcare organisations.