



Practice sting 2023-02

Practice sting Labeling syringes

this practical incentive is particularly interesting for hospitals

To avoid exchanging injections, hospital departments often choose to label the different injections that are prepared in the department with different coloured labels. The following notification shows that this can lead to problems.

Notification

In a hospital with two locations, colonoscopies are performed at each location. Before a colonoscopy, patients are given a sedation consisting of an injection of fentanyl followed by an injection of midazolam. Due to a large number of sick nurses in the endoscopy department of one location, a nurse from the endoscopy department of the other location fills in.

The nurse who fills in gives a patient the sedation. She starts with the prepared syringe with the red label. She sees on the label - after she has administered the injection - that she has not administered fentanyl but midazolam. At the location where she works, fentanyl has a red label and midazolam has a yellow label. At the location where she fills in, midazolam has a red label and fentanyl has a blue label.

Analysis

There are no uniform agreements in the hospital of the notification how the label of a medicine that has been prepared for administration - in terms of colour, layout and font - should look like. However, these types of agreements are becoming increasingly important as physicians, nurses and other healthcare workers increasingly work in multiple locations or departments.

This notification also clearly shows that a physician, nurse or other healthcare worker who picks up, declares and/or administers a medicine should never be guided by the appearance of a medicine or the colour of the label. The physician, nurse or other healthcare worker must always read the text on the label.

Recommendations

For the hospital committee that deals with medication safety

- Based on the report, discuss the following:
 - o Are there uniform agreements in our hospital about what the label of a medicine that has been prepared for administration – in terms of colour, layout and font – should look like?
 - If so, are these agreements followed? If these agreements are not followed, identify why they are not being followed. If necessary, adjust the agreements on the basis of this inventory. Bring the agreements to the attention of the departments where healthcare workers prepare medicines for administration.
 - If not, is there a need for such an appointment? If necessary, form agreements about how the label of a medicine prepared for administration should look like. Bring the agreements to the attention of the departments where healthcare workers prepare medicines for administration.

For physicians, nurses and other healthcare workers

- Pick up, give or administer a medicine according to the text on the label. Do not rely on the appearance of the medicine or the colour of the label.