



Practice sting 2023-10

Practice sting Confusion when choosing the right kind of insulin

This Practice sting is particularly interesting for pharmacists and insulin prescribers

The following notification shows that medicinal products that are similar in name and composition can be confused with each other.

Notifications

An internist prescribes Novomix® 30 to a woman. The internist prints out the electronic prescription and gives the prescription to her. The woman takes the prescription to the pharmacy. The prescription states insulin aspart/prot PEN 90/210 = 3ml (30U/70U/ml). The pharmacist's assistant delivers - after a colleague has carried out a check - Novorapid® Flexpen. The pharmacist also does not notice that it should be Novomix® 30 Flexpen. The next day, while scanning the prescriptions, a second pharmacist discovers the mistake. He calls the patient. The patient has high blood sugar, diarrhea and blurred vision. The patient recovers completely.

Analysis

The pharmacist's assistant types in 'insulin asp'. She does not see the difference between the names of Novomix® 30 (insulin aspart/prot pen 90/210e=3ml (30/70e/ml) and Novorapid® (insulin aspart injection fluid pen 300e=3ml (100e/ml). She chooses Novorapid® Flexpen. However, Novorapid® only contains the rapid-acting insulin aspart, while Novomix® 30 contains a mixture of the rapid-acting insulin aspart and the longer-acting insulin aspart protamine. In this case, things went wrong because:

1. the internist has given a paper prescription to the patient instead of sending the prescription electronically to the pharmacy. With a paper prescription, a pharmacist's assistant must manually process the prescription in the pharmacy information system. She selected the wrong medicine. With an electronically sent prescription, the correct medicine is automatically selected in the pharmacy information system.
2. the pharmacist's assistant did not know that insulin aspart is not the same as the mixture insulin aspart with insulin aspart protamine. And that with insulin aspart/prot PEN 90/210 this mixture is meant.

Recommendations

For pharmacists

- Discuss the differences between the various types of insulins in the pharmacy team.

For prescribers

- Send prescriptions electronically to the pharmacy. Only make an exception in an emergency.