

Choose Pharmacy - Discharge Medicines Review

For many people, especially the elderly, a stay in hospital can lead to lots of medication changes, and a loss of understanding of how to take the medicines as prescribed. Medicines reconciliation between leaving hospital and the GP service is known to be an area where discrepancies arise, which can have important implications for patient safety.

A service called Choose Pharmacy is helping to provide a solution to this problem, by allowing pharmacists to check the medicines information given in a patient's discharge letter matches with the first GP prescription the patient receives after leaving hospital.

Choose Pharmacy is a secure digital platform. It has three applications the CAS (Common Ailments Service), SFV (Seasonal Flu Vaccination) and the DMR (Discharge Medicines Review). The DMR application provides pharmacists with electronic access to the medicines information from the hospital discharge advice letter (DAL). The pharmacist can then reconcile the information with the first GP prescription the patient receives after leaving hospital. The pharmacist is responsible for resolving any differences and ensuring the patient understands how to take their medicines.

The Royal Pharmaceutical Society states the likelihood that an elderly medical patient will be discharged from hospital on the same medicines that they were admitted on is less than 10%. Between 28-40% of medicines are discontinued during hospitalisation, 45% of medicines prescribed at discharge are new medicines and 60% of patients have 3 or more medicines changed during their hospital stay.

The aim of the Choose Pharmacy DMR service is to ensure that any changes made to a patient's medicines while in hospital are enacted as intended in the community. To carry out a review, the community pharmacist needs to be in receipt of a copy of the patient's hospital discharge advice letter (DAL).

Before Choose Pharmacy, community pharmacies were unable to access these electronically and relied on patients to provide paper copies or have them faxed from hospitals, with patients' consent. These copies were sometimes handwritten, difficult to read and were not always received in a timely manner, compromising patient safety.

The Choose Pharmacy DMR application was launched as a pilot service in 2015. One of the first pharmacy's to use the service was Sheppard's Pharmacy in Aberdare. It has gone on to use the service regularly, and says it has been a great addition to the pharmacy and their patients. Jon Lloyd Jones, Pharmacy Manager said: "You can't fault it. It means we can fulfil professional responsibility and make sure patients get the right medication".