

Clinical Manual/Nursing Practice Manual
John Dempsey Hospital

PROCEDURE FOR: Medication Administration: Therapeutic Interchange of Medication

DEFINITION: Therapeutic interchange is defined as dispensing a drug that is chemically and generically different from the drug originally prescribed. The drugs must be in the same therapeutic class, have the same pharmacologic properties, and be used for the same FDA-approved indications.

- POLICY:**
1. The Pharmacy and Therapeutics Committee approves drugs for therapeutic interchange to be dispensed in one of three ways described in this procedure. Each approved drug or drug class has a specific procedure on the manner of interchangeability.
 2. Physicians and pharmacists with expertise in the area of practice related to therapeutic interchange advise the Pharmacy and Therapeutics Committee on policy development.
 3. The Pharmacy Department is responsible for developing a procedure for any therapeutic interchange proposal and amending this procedure once approval is granted by the committee.

- PROCEDURE:**
1. Drug Selection
 - a. A member of the Pharmacy and Therapeutics committee drafts a proposal to the committee using the peer reviewed medical literature and experience to substantiate the potential for therapeutic interchange.
 - b. The committee votes to approve the proposal, approve with modification, or to reject it.
 2. Category Selection
 - a. The committee must determine in which category the drug or drug class will be placed.
 - 1) Category I: Automatic Substitution: No contact to physician.
 - a) This category allows the pharmacist to substitute one drug for another without informing the physician. In CPOE, Pharmacy will place the substitution order in the Pharmacy system. This substitution order will then travel back to the CPOE system replace the previous electronic MD order.
 - b) Examples:

Antacids - Category I:
The pharmacy dispenses one brand of magnesium/aluminum antacid with simethicone. Any order for

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different antacids will be interchanged with the current brand. Example: Maalox or Riopan is ordered, Mylanta is dispensed at an equivalent dose.

Benzodiazepine hypnotics (intermediate acting) - Category I:

The pharmacy dispenses one preferred product as the intermediate acting benzodiazepine hypnotic, either temazepam (Restoril) or flurazepam (Dalmane). The preferred product is substituted at an equivalent dose.

Oral first generation cephalosporin - Category I:

The pharmacy stocks and dispenses the preferred product as the oral first generation cephalosporin, typically cephalexin. The preferred product is substituted at the equivalent dose.

Parenteral first generation cephalosporin - Category I:

The pharmacy dispenses a preferred product as the first generation parenteral cephalosporin, typically cefazolin. The preferred product is substituted at the equivalent dose.

2) Category II: Substitution with physician informed by written documentation in the chart.

- a) This category allows the pharmacist to substitute but requires notification in the patient's medical record. Pharmacy will place the substitution order in the Invision CPOE. The pharmacist will name the ordering party and the order will go to the countersignature census of the practitioner who was notified of the change and also to the attending's countersignature census.

b) Example:

Parenteral histamine-2 antagonist - Category II:

The Pharmacy and Therapeutics Committee has determined that the parenteral histamine - 2 antagonist agents, ranitidine and famotidine, are therapeutically equivalent. The pharmacy designates one product the preferred product and informs the ordering physician with a note in the physician's order sheet of the substitution or in CPOE, informs the ordering practitioner with an electronically placed order that will require countersignature.

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Per Pharmacy and Therapeutics Committee
Therapeutic Interchange Policy:

D/C _____
(ordered H₂ antagonist)

Current Preferred Drug/Dose

Pharmacist Signature

- c) The non-preferred product may be used if the patient has a documented adverse effect or experienced therapeutic failure with the preferred agent. These must be documented in the patient's medical record and the physician must inform the pharmacist that the non-preferred product is required.
- 3) Category III: Substitution with physician informed by verbal or telephone contact.
- a) This category allows the pharmacist to substitute but requires prior approval of the interchange by verbal or telephone contact with the physician. In CPOE, Pharmacy will place the substitution order. The pharmacist will name the ordering party and the order will go to the countersignature census of the MD who was contacted and notified of the change along with the attending of record.
 - b) Examples:
 - Intravenous Immune Globulin - Category III:
The Pharmacy and Therapeutics Committee has determined that the intravenous immune globulin (IVIG) products are therapeutically equivalent. Therefore, the pharmacy designates one product as the preferred product. Other products may be used if there is a documented adverse effect or there is a therapeutic failure. These must be documented by the physician in the patient's medical record. The pharmacist informs the physician verbally or by telephone if he or she orders an IVIG product other than the preferred product. The preferred product is substituted once approval is granted by the ordering physician.

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3. Any new drug or drug class approved for interchange is placed in category II or III initially. Once pharmacists and physicians gain experience with the interchange, and any revisions are made in the procedure, every attempt is made to place the drug or drug class in Category I.
4. Any category shift must be approved by the Pharmacy and Therapeutics Committee.

APPROVAL: Nursing Standards Committee
Department of Pharmacy

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