

Guide to Good Nursing Practice

Administration of Medication

Preamble

A medication is a substance administered for the diagnosis, treatment, mitigation, or prevention of disease. The administration of medication is an important aspect of professional nursing practice. It involves a complex process from initial assessment, and the administration of medication to the collection of essential information for subsequent evaluation of client's responses, appropriate documentation, and follow-up communication with the health care team as deemed necessary. The purpose of this guideline is to establish principles in the administration of medication. It is not intended to cover every situation that nurses may encounter, but sets out principles to assist nurses in the application of professional expertise and judgement in the best interest of their clients.

Definition

'Administration of medication' is the process of identifying the correct medication, delivering it to the correct client by the correct route and correct dosage at the time prescribed.

Principles

In the process of administration of medication, the nurse needs to consider the following:

1. Enforce local policies and procedures or protocols of administration of medication at practice setting and that nurse follows these at all times.
2. Prepare the medication safely as prescribed by the appropriate authority.
3. Ensure safe and effective administration of medication in all practice settings.
4. Exercise professional judgment and apply knowledge and skills in the given situation.

Responsibilities of the nurse

1. The nurse understands the therapeutic use of the medication, its normal dose, side effects, precautions and contra-indications.
2. The nurse checks the prescribed medication against the client's known allergies.
3. The nurse considers the appropriateness of administering the medication in the context of the client's current clinical condition.
4. The nurse administers the medication after confirming the identity of the client and it is the right medication, right dose, right time and right route.
5. The nurse withholds medication if he/she has any doubt during the course of the administration of medication and takes appropriate actions.
6. The nurse ensures that he/she understands how to use the medication administration devices and the risks of error that might occur with the use of such devices.
7. The nurse ensures proper disposal of residual medication and equipment.
8. The nurse observes the therapeutics and side-effects of the medication experienced by the client and provides appropriate nursing care and actions.
9. The nurse ensures appropriate storage and custody of medication.
10. The nurse ensures the dangerous drugs (DD) are handled and administered in accordance with the Dangerous Drug Ordinance, Chapter 134, Laws of Hong Kong. DD should be kept locked in a designated medication cabinet at all times.

11. The nurse maintains an accurate medication administration record.
12. The nurse provides appropriate education to client and/or his/her caregivers on the medication received.
13. The nurse documents and reports medication incidents and adverse medication reactions.
14. The nurse updates himself/herself with contemporary medication knowledge.

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