ISMP Sets Guidelines for Timely Administration of Scheduled Medications

MOSBY’S NURSING CONSULT -- The Institute for Safe Medication Practices (ISMP) has developed Acute Care Guidelines for Timely Administration of Scheduled Medications after surveying nearly 18,000 nurses about the requirement to administer medications within 30 minutes before or after the scheduled time. This requirement is listed in the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services’ (CMS) Conditions of Participation Interpretive Guidelines.

According to ISMP, survey respondents said that changes to drug delivery methods and gradual increases in the complexity of care, number of prescribed medications per patient, and number of patients assigned to each nurse have made the long-standing CMS “30-minute rule” error-prone.

ISMP reports that CMS staff has requested a copy of the final guidelines for review. However, for now, hospitals will still be held accountable for the “30-minute rule” in the CMS Interpretive Guidelines.

The ISMP acute care guidelines define scheduled medications as “all maintenance doses administered according to a standard, repeated cycle of frequency (eg, q4h, QID, TID, BID, daily, weekly, monthly, annually).”

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