
A recent study published in Critical Care Medicine concluded that automated drug dispensing systems reduce medication errors in intensive care settings.

Medication errors are defined as any preventable event that may lead to inappropriate medication use or patient harm. According to available data, medication errors harm more than 1.5 million people and cause 7,000 deaths annually in the United States.

Critically ill patients are more vulnerable to medication errors, and the risk of errors is increased in these patients because of the number of drugs they receive and the way they are administered. Therefore, reducing errors is crucial to improving patients' outcomes. Automated dispensing systems have been introduced to improve the medication use process and provide secure storage and drug distribution in care units.

The study, completed by a team of twelve licensed pharmacists, aimed to assess the impact of an automated dispensing system on the incidence of medication errors related to picking, preparation, and administration of drugs in a medical intensive care unit.

This study was conducted over the course of 4 months in two Medical Intensive Care Units of the same department in a 2,000-bed university hospital. Both units had comparable activities and shared the same staff.

In one setting, medications were delivered daily with a floor stock drug distribution system and nurses picked drugs directly from the classic medicine cabinet.

In the other setting, an automated dispensing system stored most of the medications directly in the nursing unit.

The results of the four-month long study showed that the automated dispensing system sharply reduced medication errors. The most frequent errors concerned preparation and administration processes. Dose errors were significantly reduced in the automated dispensing system setting, from 3.8% to 0.5%. In addition, storage errors were drastically decreased by the automated dispensing system (96% reduction; p < .01). Furthermore, the automated dispensing system was well perceived by nurses, with the overwhelming majority wishing to continue using the automated dispensing system (96.7%).
In conclusion, the implementation of an automated dispensing system reduced overall medication errors related to picking, preparation, and administration of drugs in the intensive care unit. Furthermore, most nurses favored the new drug dispensation organization.

Medbox is a leader in the automated medication dispensing system industry, and has a patented, biometrically secure system that further reduces misappropriation of medication and increases transparency and accountability.

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**About Medbox:**

Medbox is a leader in the development, sales and service of automated, biometrically controlled, dispensing and storage systems for medicine. Medbox has offices throughout the world, including New York, Tokyo and Toronto, and has their corporate headquarters in Los Angeles.

Medbox provides their patented systems, software and consulting services to pharmacies, urgent care centers, clinics, hospitals, and medical groups worldwide.

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