



Use of Medication Assistants / Technicians

Myth Medication Assistants can be trained to safely administer medications.

Fact

Safe administration of medications is much more than a technical process.

The medication administration procedure involves the “five rights” which are: the right patient, right medication, right dose, right method and the right time. Also, a sixth right has been proposed – the right response of the patient to the medication. Nurses are the sixth right, in evaluating for the “right” response. (Wilson & DiVito-Thomas 2004)

The administration of medications involves complex thinking and application of scientific knowledge.

The actual act of administering medication is a small part of the professional nurse’s responsibility in the medication administration process. Professional vigilance is required when administering medication and includes:

- Observation for signals and cues as to whether the medication is working as intended.
- Calculation of risk associated with the medication and a readiness to act appropriately and efficiently.

(Eisenhauer et al., Nurses Thinking During Medication Administration 2007) *Journal Of Nursing Scholarship*)

Any nursing intervention that requires independent, specialized, nursing knowledge, skill or judgment can not be delegated. (*Registered Nurse Utilization of Unlicensed Assistive Personnel Position Statement, ANA 1992*)

Nurses are the last link in the safety net to prevent errors.

For further information, you may contact ANA:

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