

4.15 An Audit of Oxygen Prescriptions in Medical Patients in a Model 3 Hospital

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Medical oxygen is one of the most commonly used drugs in acute care settings. Inadequate prescribing is common, as shown in a UK national audit where only 57.5% of patients had a valid prescription.¹ This audit aims to evaluate if oxygen was prescribed as per Irish Thoracic Society (ITS) guidelines in medical inpatients.² A snapshot audit of oxygen prescription in 196 medical inpatients was undertaken on the 3rd July 2022. Adherence with ITS Oxygen prescription guidelines should include documentation of SpO₂, flow rate, target SpO₂, delivery system and duration/review date.

Out of 196 patients, 43 (21.94%) were on oxygen therapy however none had an oxygen prescription that was compliant with ITS guidelines. 5 (2.55%) charts included a target saturation. 4 (2.04%) charts had a flow rate prescribed and 4 (2.04%) charts had a delivery system specified. The medication chart used in our centre lacks a review date in the oxygen prescription section, therefore all charts failed to meet this aspect of prescribing standards.

Our results highlight a significant absence of correct oxygen prescribing across all medical inpatients. A multifaceted intervention encompassing prescriber education, nursing checks on medication rounds and medication chart redesign is planned to improve compliance with ITS guidelines.

1. O'Driscoll, R. British Thoracic Society Emergency Oxygen Audit Report National Audit Period: 15 August – 1 November 2015. United Kingdom. 2016.
2. Irish Thoracic Society. Irish Guidelines on the Administration of Oxygen Therapy in the Acute Clinical Setting in Adults 2017. Ireland. 2017.

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