

8.10 An Audit of Oxygen Prescription Rates in St James' Hospital Dublin

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Background: Oxygen is among the most commonly used drugs in the hospital setting. As with all drugs, inappropriate use may cause harm, particularly in patients at risk of hypercapnia. BTS Guidelines recommend oxygen is prescribed and that target saturations / recommended flow rates be documented.¹

Method: On two separate days (in February and May 2023), we reviewed all inpatients in St James's Hospital and noted those receiving oxygen therapy. We then reviewed charts to assess for:

- a) Oxygen prescription on the drug chart
- b) Instructions in medical notes re: target saturations / flow rates

Results: 78 patients were on oxygen therapy at the time of audit. Only 6 patients (7.7%) had a valid prescription. Of these, 4 were inpatient in either CCU or ICU. 33 (42.3%) had instructions documented in medical notes. 39 (50%) patients receiving oxygen had no prescription or documented plan regarding oxygen therapy.

Conclusion: There were poor rates of oxygen prescription across all areas of the hospital. CCU and ICU (where oxygen is part of an pre-set admission "bundle") had the highest rates. After educational interventions, we plan to re-audit in 2 months assessing for improvement in oxygen prescription rates.

Keywords: Oxygen; prescribing