

**A STUDY OF OCCURRENCE OF NONCOMPLIANCE WITH  
PRESCRIPTION WRITING REQUIREMENTS AND MEDICATION  
ERRORS IN OUTPATIENT DEPARTMENT PHARMACY IN HUSM  
KUBANG KERIAN**



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## ABSTRACT

Medication errors are one of the critical problems happen in medical field and still remain as a big challenge to the medical practitioners. In this study, new prescriptions received by an outpatient pharmacy department of a teaching hospital in Kelantan were analysed retrospectively for noncompliance with prescriptions writing requirements as well as to identify the types of medication error. The study involved screening of prescriptions for 5 days period, from 26<sup>th</sup> September 2010 to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2010 involving 1290 manual prescriptions from various clinic and unit. Of the 1290 prescriptions, 763 errors were found. Generally, the errors of omission (incomplete information) are the most frequent happened which is made up of 717 errors (94%) out of total errors involving incomplete prescriber details (name, signature, official stamp), patient details (name, age, registration number), date, incomplete document, illegible handwriting, route of administration, dose, frequency, strength, unit of strength, dosage form, duration of therapy and diagnosis. The errors of commission (wrong information) detected was only 46 (6%), involving wrong drug name, unauthorized abbreviations, route of administration, dose, frequency, strength, unit of strength, dosage form, and drugs interaction. Although the errors of omission are not hazardous, but still the need for improvement is important because the total of 717 errors happened for 5 days is quite a big number. In conclusion, it is very clear that the role of pharmacist is great in preventing and minimizing the medications errors beside the needs of correct prescription writing and other strategies by all of the health care components.

*Keywords: noncompliance, medication errors, error of omission, error of commission, pharmacists*

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Prescription is a written document that engages the order from doctor, dentist or veterinary practitioner to pharmacist for the supply of medicine, dressing or appliance to patient<sup>1</sup>.

A perfect prescribed prescription should basically contain a complete patient's details (patient's name, age, sex and hospital registration number), prescriber's information (name of prescriber, signature and official stamp), a complete drug's details (name of drug, strength, dosage form desired, quantity, dose, frequency and route of administration), date and Rx symbol.

Prescription writing is one of the most important basic skills that a doctor needs, thus specific training and supervision in prescription should be emphasised during undergraduate teaching to minimise related errors such as medication errors.

Medication errors defined as any error in the prescribing, dispensing or administration of a drug whether there are adverse consequences or not, they could be the single most preventable cause of patient injury<sup>2,3</sup>. Noncompliance in prescription writing usually contribute to several medication errors to occur.

Medication error can be divided into three major types; prescribing errors, administration errors and dispensing error. Meanwhile, in this study, there are two different way of errors can be done through prescribing errors; omission errors and commission errors. Omission error is defined as prescriptions with essential information missing or in other word, incomplete prescription writing with several important informations left. Commission errors can be defined as wrong written information in the prescription.

Omission errors include absence or incomplete specification of dosage form or strength, dose or dosage regimen, quantity or duration of drug to be supplied, illegible handwriting in prescription, unwritten date on prescription, incomplete document