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Challenge for Preventing Medication Errors -Learn from Errors-: What Is the Most Effective Label Display to Prevent Medication Error for Injectable Drug?

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Abstract. In the medical institutions, more than 50% of the error report is related to the administration of pharmaceuticals. And the half of the report is related to the administration of injectable drug.

By analyzing the error report, the inducing factor of medication error are not only the name similarity (sound alike) and the appearance similarity (look alike) of the preparations but also the display of the ingredient amount of the injectable drug which has 3 types ("X% YmL", "Xmg/mL YmL", and "Xmg/YmL").

The difficulty of the calculation seems to differ in these three types of display. Comparison of the right answer in these three types of display is tried for 6 subject groups which are three health care providers (physician, nurse and pharmacist) and their students. As a result, the calculation right answer percentage was high in "Xmg/YmL", "Xmg/mL YmL" and "X% YmL" in turn.

Keywords: medication error, error inducing factor, display of the ingredient amount.

1 Introduction

In the medical institutions, more than 50% of the error report is related to the administration of pharmaceutical preparations. And the half of the report is related to the administration of injectable drug (Fig.1). By analyzing the error report, the major inducing factors of medication error are the name similarity (sound alike) and the appearance similarity (look alike) of the pharmaceutical preparations.

It is not easy to calculate the right dose of the injectable drug prescribed in clinical situation, and the calculation result can not be sufficiently confirmed in emergency condition. As a result, the wrong dose can be administered to patients without recognizing calculation error.

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By reviewing the measure to prevent calculation error in clinical setting, Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare (MHLW) sent the notice to pharmaceutical companies on June 2nd of 2004 in Japan (Fig.2).

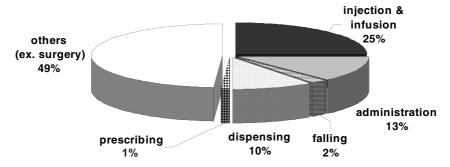


Fig. 1. Classification of Error Report in Japanese Medical Institution

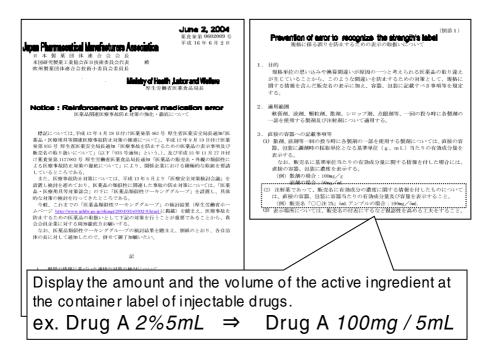


Fig. 2. Notice from MHLW: Reinforcement to Prevent Medication Error (June 2, 2004)

2 Objective

The label type of injectable drugs' strengths for preventing calculation errors is evaluated by comparing the correct answer rates to three label types, which are "X% YmL", "Xmg/mL YmL", and "Xmg/YmL.

Table 1.	Number	of Trial	Subject
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Subjects	Number
physician	44
Nurse	506
pharmacist	206
Medical Student	85
Nursing Student	162
Pharmacy Student	211

Q1 Physician ordered "Administer Xylocaine® 30mg, intravenously".

What "mL" should you administer to the patient?

2%5mL

Fig. 3. Calculation Example A

printed on the label

Q2 Physician ordered "Administer Xylocaine® 30mg, intravenously".

What "mL" should you administer to the patient?

20mg/mL 5mL

printed on the label

Fig. 4. Calculation Example B

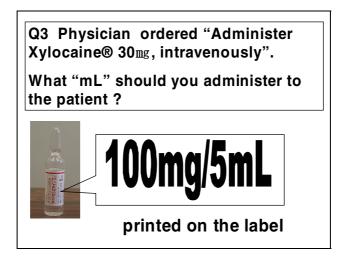


Fig. 5. Calculation Example C

3 Method

In this research, two objects are investigated.

3.1 Calculation of Dosage in Example Case

Three label types are showed to three health care providers (physician, nurse, pharmacist) and their students by presentation of images on screen for 30 seconds (Table 1, Fig.3-5).

Calculation of the dosage is tried by each health care providers and their students within the presentation time (30 seconds).

3.2 Label Type of New Preparations

Label type of new preparations marketed after the notice of MHLW was examined (June in 2004 – December in 2006).

4 Results

4.1 Calculation of Dosage

The correction rates to "X% YmL" are 25.0% (physicians), 2.6% (nurses), 35.4%(pharmacists), "Xmg/mL YmL" are 79.5% (physicians), 36.6% (nurses), 72.6% (pharmacists), "Xmg/YmL" are 88.6% (physicians), 51.2% (nurses), 85.2% (pharmacists) (Fig.6).

In all surveyed health care providers, correction rates increased "X% YmL", "Xmg/mL YmL" and "Xmg/YmL" in turn, significantly(p<0.01, chi-square test). And same results were observed in the health care students (Fig.7).

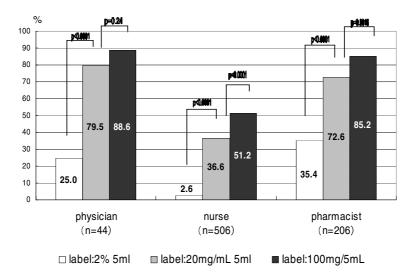


Fig. 6. Comparison of Right Calculation Percent in Each Health Care Providers (p:chi-square value)

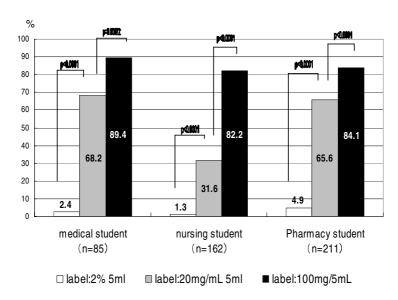


Fig. 7. Comparison of Right Calculation Percent in Each Health Care Students (p:chi-square value)

These results indicate the most effective label type to prevent calculation errors is "Xmg/YmL" for injectable drugs' strengths.

4.2 Label Type of New Preparations

The injectable drug which was marketed after the notice was 83 preparations (brand based), and 7 combination preparations, 5 transfusion preparations and 28 solid preparations to dissolve before use which can not display "Xmg/YmL" are 43 in 83 preparations (Fig.8).

Only 4 of 43 preparations which can display "Xmg/YmL" were displayed in "%", and all of these 4 preparations are found "Xmg/YmL" on preparation label together.

As the result, "Xmg/YmL" were displayed in all of 43 preparation labels.

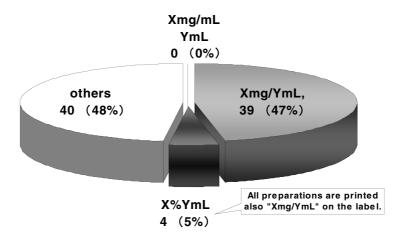


Fig. 8. Label type of new preparations marketed after the notice of MHLW

5 Conclusion

The most effective label type of injectable drugs' strengths for preventing calculation error is "Xmg/YmL" in this research, and the most effective "Xmg/YmL" is same as the indication in the notice from MHLW on June 4, 2004.

"Xmg/YmL" label is well accepted to the pharmaceutical companies after the notice of MHLW.

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