

Are patients being discharged with the right amount of antibiotics?

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Background: Prescribing systems in Leeds Teaching Hospitals Trust (LTHT) vary between the Emergency Department (ED) and inpatients, with ED prescribing on paper for some patients and inpatients using the electronic prescribing system (eMeds). When antibiotics are prescribed, initial doses can be on paper in ED, and there are also multiple places to prescribe them within eMeds. Consequently, there is a risk that patients do not receive the correct antibiotic course length on discharge.

Aims:

- To identify whether the correct antibiotic course lengths are prescribed on discharge.
- To identify the different prescription areas that antibiotics are prescribed.
- To identify which World Health Organisation (WHO) Aware/Watch/Reserve categories the antibiotics prescribe fall in.
- To identify the cost of any unnecessary, additional doses prescribed.

Methods: Discharge prescription data from October 2024 was taken and from 3981 antibiotic courses, 65 courses across all clinical areas of LTHT identified for review. Patients had their PPM+ records reviewed to identify where antimicrobials were prescribed, and the number of total doses prescribed. PPM+ clinical notes and antimicrobial guidelines were reviewed to identify appropriate course lengths for antibiotics.

Results:

- 63% of course lengths were too long
- 22% of course lengths were correct
- 15% of course lengths were too short
- An additional 112 doses prescribed from 65 courses of antibiotics on discharge, costing £12.64, extrapolated to £1263 for the month.
- Most additional antibiotics prescribed were in the 'Watch' category

Conclusion: Patients are generally not receiving the correct course length of antibiotics on discharge, likely due to the multiple places they can be prescribed. It is also likely that in some cases, the number of intravenous doses is not being taken into account when patients are switched from IV to oral antibiotics. More work needs to be done to raise awareness of ensuring correct course lengths on discharge.