

‘We are going to close the medication loop in 2016’

Peter Wierenga and his team have moved mountains in 2015. Renovating the pharmacy, implementing MedEye, using an automated ordering system, and implementing clinical rules have all helped reduce costs in the hospital. The Mission for 2016: ‘More visibility in the hospital.’

Peter Wierenga did not stand still last year, not on his new carbon racing bike nor at the DZ pharmacy. ‘One of the big projects we have finalised, is the renovation of the department and the improvement of the logistical processes. 800 to 1000 prescriptions arrive here on a daily basis. Those medications need to be packed, checked and delivered to the ward.’

‘The space was too tight. We were in each other’s way. We renovated the whole pharmacy. During the renovation we optimized the inventory. Now we have a new system in which inventories are automatically replenished. Therefore we’ll never run out of supply and medications won’t expire.’

The hospital pharmacy wants to move to a ‘closed-loop’ for all medications. The pharmacy renovation and the automated verification system were all part of this effort. The entire process from prescription to medication administration at the bedside is now digital.

MedEye

We realized that something had to change at the bedside to achieve a closed loop. Administering medication is a manual process and is subject to errors. Peter: ‘At a congress I came across MedEye, a verification device that scans individual tablets and capsules. Some hospitals utilize barcodes as a verification method; I find that too limiting as half of the medications don’t have a barcode. MedEye recognises medications of all shapes, colours, inscriptions and sizes. Also MedEye can scan syringes and infusion fluids. This eliminates double checking by a nurse. This will relieve time from the nurses. We have tested MedEye and we will implement the system hospital wide; then we can truly close the loop.’

Greater role

Peter Wieringa: ‘I expect in the next few years that it will become more common for a patient to use all of their home medications in the hospital. In the future, MedEye will be able to scan medications the patients bring from home. The pharmacy will be more involved in the whole medication process for the patient, including intake and discharge. This results in better continuity, more safety and is cheaper.’

Peter: ‘In general, the treatments in hospitals are becoming more complex, while at the same time hospitalizations will be shorter. Due to this we need to give the right medication and medication information from the home in a timely manner. Here we can play an important role as a hospital pharmacy. Until now, we could hardly control these daily prescriptions in an adequate manner. This was caused by the old fashioned way where hundreds of prescriptions were assigned.’