## Post-Discharge Follow-Up Telephone Call by a Pharmacist and Impact on Patient Care

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**Background:** Complex medical regimens and shortened lengths of stay are a set-up for inadequate education regarding medical and medication therapies. Literature has demonstrated that calling patients at home after discharge can increase patient satisfaction, resolve medication-related problems and decrease emergency room (ER) visits.

**Methods:** A prospective trial using two similar inpatient general medicine firms was conducted to determine if a post-discharge phone call from a pharmacist reduces 30-day readmission rates. The primary endpoint was a comparison of the number of hospital readmissions (all cause) during the 30-day post-discharge period between groups. Secondary outcomes include the number of patients for whom interventions were made pertaining to primary discharge diagnosis, medications and follow-up appointments.

**Results:** To date, the first 70 telephone interviews have been completed and 50 telephone interviews have been analyzed for 30-day readmission rates (goal = 100). Interim data (n=50) reveals that patients receiving a post-discharge phone call are 18% less likely to be readmitted to the hospital within 30 days (total of emergency room visits and inpatient hospitalizations). The interviewing pharmacist performed interventions on 72% of patients. Types of interventions included calling the physician, patient education and resolving missing prescriptions.

**Conclusions:** Due to the promising results, the pharmacy department will implement a full-time formal discharge and follow-up service.

## **Author Disclosure Block:**

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