REPORT TOUTS 'MED-OP' TECHNOLOGY FOR OLDER ADULTS

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Report touts 'med-op' technology for older adults

December 28, 2009 | Molly Merrill, Associate Editor

OAKLAND, CA – Information technology is key to improving medication-related errors and improving medication adherence among older adults, according to a recent report.

Produced by the Center for Technology and Aging in Oakland, Calif., the report says "widespread use" of technology aimed at this population could save thousands of lives and billions of dollars.

"More widespread use of technologies that reduce the cost and burden of medication-related illness among older adults is urgently needed," said David Lindeman, the center's director.

According to the Institute of Medicine, more than 2 million serious adverse drug events and about 100,000 deaths occur annually due to medication use problems. The New England Healthcare Institute estimates that $290 billion in healthcare expenditures could be avoided if medication adherence were improved.

"Medication non-adherence is responsible for up to 33 percent to 69 percent of medication-related hospital admissions and 23 percent of all nursing home admissions," said Lindeman. "As Congress debates ways to improve our healthcare system and lower costs, it will be critical to put in place incentives that encourage providers to accelerate the use of available 'med-op' technologies."

The report addresses three areas of opportunity for medication optimization: reconciliation, adherence and monitoring. It describes the technologies being used or under development within the three areas along with an assessment of their pros, cons, market stage and economics.

Some of the technologies described include:

- Medication kiosks, such as those piloted at the Veterans Health Administration;

- Walgreen's online medication history tool for consumers;

- Cognitive assessment tests like the Mini-Mental State Exam (MMSE);

- "Rex," a talking pill bottle designed by Pittsbugh-based MedivoxRx that assists visually or cognitively impaired patients;

- The Med-eMonitor System, a portable electronic medication-dispensing device from Rockville, Md.-based InforMedix;

- Mobile phone apps with medication management, reporting and trending features; and

- Wireless point-of-care testing devices to monitor medication use.

According to the report, of the 3 billion medication prescriptions issued each year in the United States,12 percent are never picked up by the patient and 40 percent are not taken correctly.

"And yet, effective tools and technologies already exist to greatly reduce these problems," said Lindeman. "Ultimately, medication optimization technologies can lead to significant improvements in the cost and quality of care for older adults."

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Shavelsky says:
December 31, 2009 | 1:30PM GMT

New emerging technologies

I enjoyed reading this comprehensive report. Many technologies and programs are mentioned. I would like to invite readers to learn also about MedMinder Systems (www.medminder.com). We provide a new solution that helps the elderly with many of the challenges discussed.

Best,
Eran Shavelsky
MedMinder Systems
www.medminder.com

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