

Background

Look-alike/sound-alike errors are a common form of medication error. Up to 25% of all medication errors can be attributed to name confusion.¹ JCAHO 2005 National patient Safety Goals include a goal focused on identifying and reviewing look-alike/sound-alike medications.² A list of the most problematic look-alike/sound-alike drugs for healthcare settings was disseminated by JCAHO. Institutions are expected to take actions to prevent errors involving the interchange of these medications. Specifically, 10 drug combinations must be focused on, and methods to prevent their interchange must be implemented. In addition, the 2004 ISMP Medication Safety Self-Assessment for Hospitals recommends strategies be implemented² to minimize the possibility of errors with drug products that have similar or confusing drug names that look and/or sound alike.³ Efforts to prevent look-alike/sound-alike errors are expected to have a significant effect on medication safety.