

Cardiology ward based technician: positive impact on patient outcomes in an acute chronic disease setting

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Background

Delays were identified in patients receiving discharge medications and other non-clinical inpatient services. A ward based technician was introduced to work in collaboration with clinical pharmacists, nursing and medical staff, to overcome this gap in the service.

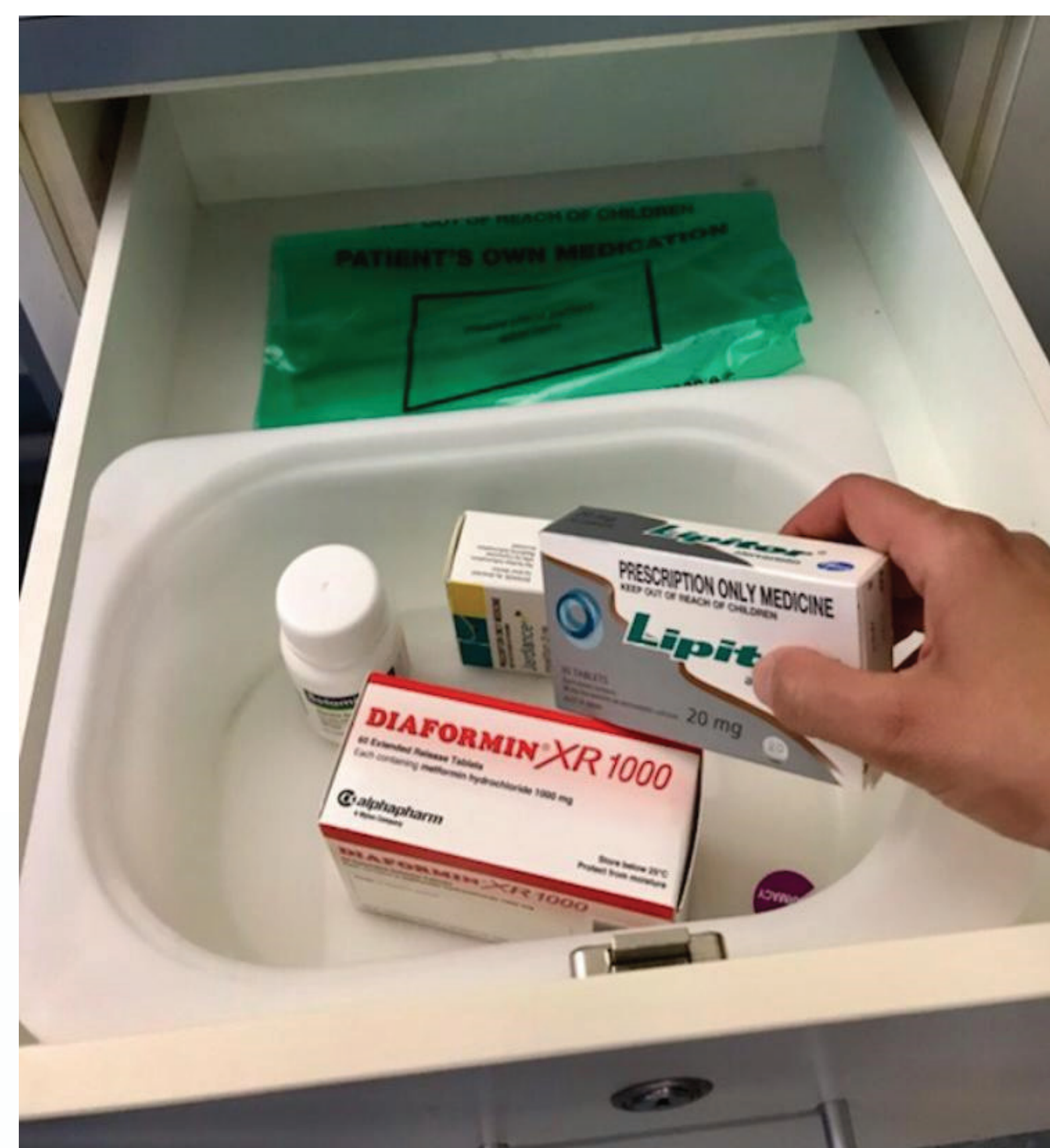


Figure 1: Placement of charted imprest medicines in bedside draw during PBMM task

Description

A literature review and stakeholder feedback were performed to create the role. Limitations relating to scope of practice were identified and competency based assessment tools and procedures were developed.

Action

A technician was introduced to the cardiology ward, for a duration of three months (August-October 2016) to improve waiting times for discharge medication supply, streamline non-clinical services to the ward and to assist pharmacy and nursing staff in timely supply and administration of medicines. The technician was conveniently positioned near ward staff, to assist intervention prior to dispensing and be supported during the Patient Bedside Medicines Management (PBMM) tasks. Five weeks of data was obtained on timeliness of discharge medication supply and related interventions contributing to prior delays. Task specific data collection tools were created for the PBMM tasks.

Evaluation

78 of 90 patients received medicines on or prior to the allocated discharge time, an improvement of 24% post implementation of a ward based technician compared to pre implementation. 118 patients were reviewed during the PBMM tasks. Figure 2 illustrates the break down in tasks performed. 40 non-clinical interventions were recorded by the technician. Figure 3 shows the types of interventions recorded including risk ratings of patient harm. A revised inpatient medicines supply procedure was also created.

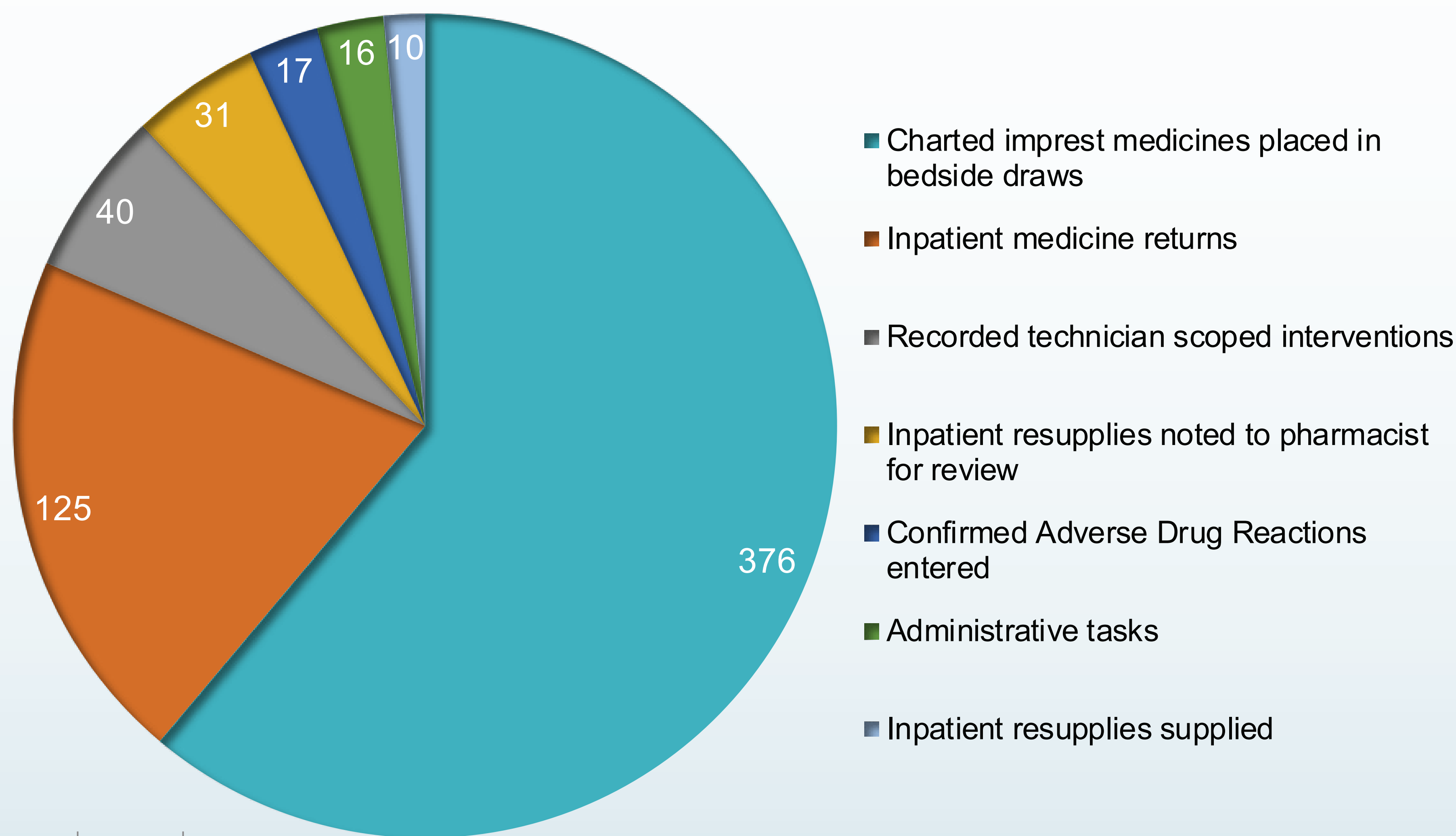


Figure 2: Number of times each task was performed during PBMM task (includes interventions from discharge facilitation)

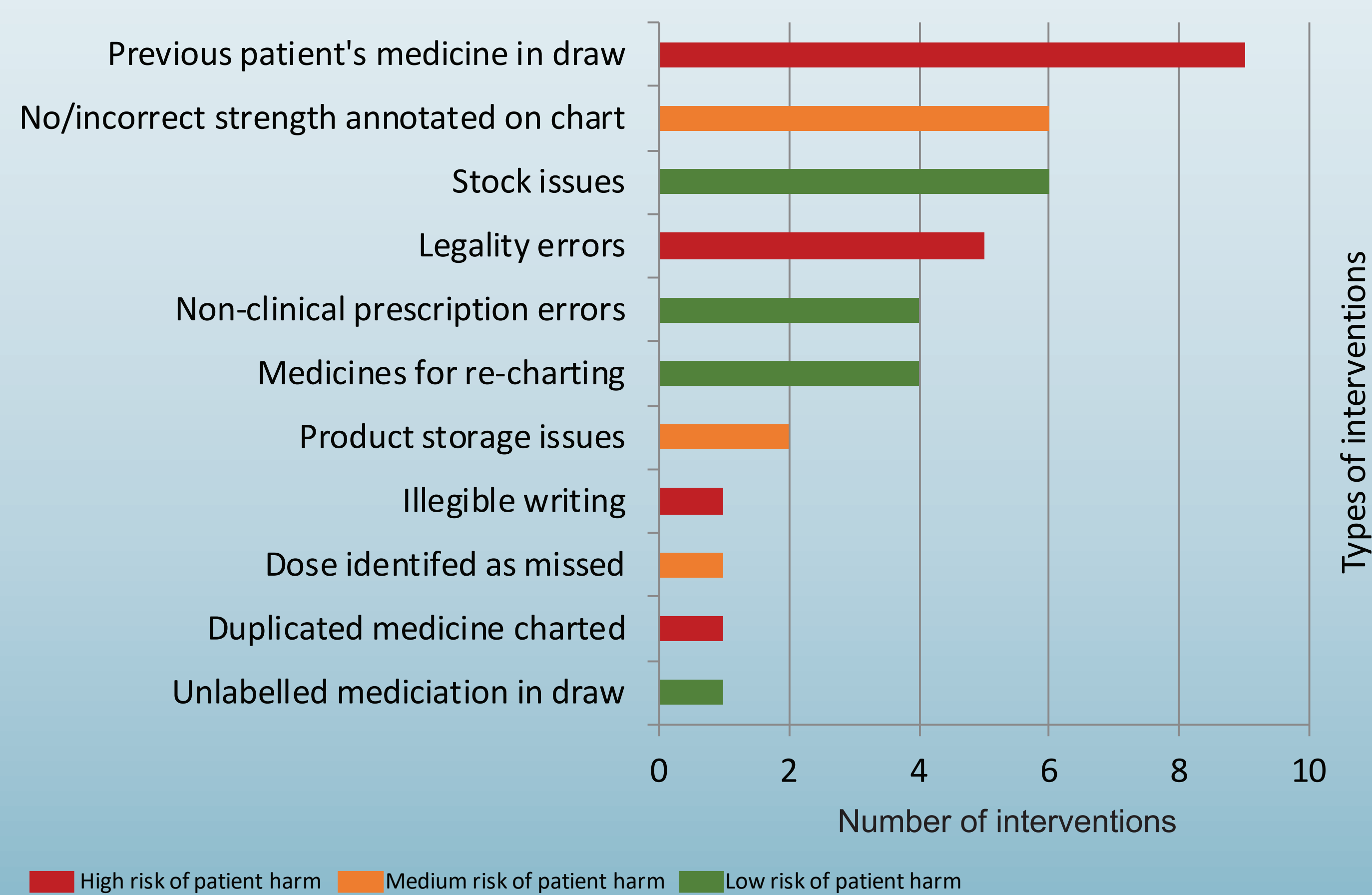


Figure 3: Categorised technician scoped interventions, including risk ratings of patient harm. (Discharge facilitation and PBMM task)

Implications

The support of the ward based technician reduced the workload of non-clinical services for pharmacy and nursing staff in relation to timely discharge facilitation and improved the services relating to inpatient tasks. The results demonstrate the need for technicians to support clinical workload at ward level, to further optimise patient's outcomes through opportunities of extended scope roles.