

A review of verbal order policies in acute care hospitals.

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Wakefield DS, Wakefield BJ, Despina L, et al. A review of verbal order policies in acute care hospitals. Jt Comm J Qual Patient Saf. 2012;38(1):24-33.

<https://psnet.ahrq.gov/issue/review-verbal-order-policies-acute-care-hospitals>

[Verbal orders](#), usually for medications, are commonly used in the inpatient setting despite being a [recognized source](#) of error. This survey of 40 hospitals found wide variation in hospital policies regarding verbal orders, with no uniform standard on which providers were allowed to give or receive verbal orders and varying approaches to documenting these orders. Although specific methods, such as [read-backs](#), are endorsed for improving the reliability of verbal orders, few hospitals specifically mandated the use of these communication tools. A case of a misunderstood verbal order that led to a serious error is discussed in this AHRQ WebM&M [commentary](#).