Objectives

- Medication errors involving contraceptive medications have not been well-explored.
- The consequences of medication incidents involving contraceptives can be significant, ranging from adverse effects such as breakthrough bleeding and breast tenderness depending on the dose of the contraceptive, to unintended pregnancies due to improper use.
- This study shares information about medication incidents involving contraceptives voluntarily reported to the ISMP Canada's Community Pharmacy Incident Reporting (CPhIR) Program (www.cphir.ca) and highlights the common themes identified through a multi-incident analysis.
- Specific examples of reported incidents are provided to develop system-based improvements that can be customized to pharmacy practice setting.

Methods

- Reports of medication incidents involving contraceptives were extracted from the CPhIR Program from November 2009 to March 2013.
- 256 incidents were retrieved and included in this qualitative, multi-incident analysis.
- The medication incidents were independently reviewed by two ISMP Canada Analysts.

Results

- The 256 medication incidents were categorized into two main themes (Table 1):
  1. Oral Contraceptives; and
- The two main themes were further divided into 10 subthemes (Table 2 and Table 3).

Conclusions

- The opportunity for potential medication incidents involving contraceptives can occur at various points along the stages of medication use, such as prescribing, order entry, and dispensing of the contraceptive products.
- Pharmacies can apply incident analysis findings to pinpoint specific areas of weakness in their medication delivery systems and to prevent risk in daily practice.
- The ultimate goal is to continuously improve patient safety and thus the quality of care through the analysis of incidents and sharing of lessons learned from these reports.

References

5. Available at www.cphir.ca
6. Available at www.cphir.ca