



5 QUESTIONS TO ASK ABOUT YOUR MEDICATIONS

Improving Medication Safety One Question At A Time



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Objectives:

“5 Questions to Ask About Your Medications” is a national campaign to help patients and healthcare providers engage in a conversation about medication safety. It was developed to provide patients with questions they can ask to start a conversation about their medications with their healthcare provider at transitions of care.

Description:

In partnership and with support from the Canadian Patient Safety Institute and in collaboration with Patients for Patient Safety Canada, the Canadian Pharmacists Association and the Canadian Society for Hospital Pharmacists, ISMP Canada led the development and dissemination of the “5 Questions to Ask About Your Medications” by:

- Conducting an environmental scan of best practices, tools and evidence
- Forming an advisory group of patients and representatives
- Co-developing a draft list of questions with patients
- Obtaining external stakeholder feedback on the content and design through an online survey
- Testing by a sample of patients and healthcare providers
- Incorporating feedback and improving content and design
- Launching the campaign with a media event and national webinar with the Canadian Patient Safety Institute and Patients for Patient Safety Canada (March 2016)
- Providing opportunities to endorse the campaign, and inviting healthcare organizations to add their logo to the poster
- Ensuring availability of the information in multiple languages
- Creating a patient friendly video describing the 5 Questions to Ask About Your Medications
- Sharing the poster internationally – by a representative from Patients for Patient Safety Canada at the WHO World Health Assembly Side Event in May 2016.

Impact/Results:

- Evaluating the impact of the “5 Questions to Ask About Your Medications” has included measuring the dissemination, reach and uptake across Canada.
- Over 70 Canadian health authorities and organizations have formally endorsed the “5 Questions to Ask About Your Medications” for use within their organizations and provinces.
- These organizations represent all sectors of care including primary, community, acute and long-term care and home care.
- The poster has been disseminated through the IDS Canada’s Primary Care Digital Poster Network in over 150 doctors’ offices in Ontario representing 420 family physicians with an estimated reach of approximately 550,000 patients every 3 months. It was launched in BC and Quebec in September 2016.
- There have been 6,014 downloads of the poster from the ISMP Canada and Canadian Patient Safety Institute webpages in the 7 months since launch.
- The video has been viewed over 1000 times since its launch September 13th, 2016.
- Many local news agencies across the country have reported on the “5 Questions to Ask About Your Medications”.
- International interest is growing. Endorsements are being received from international organizations.
- Further evaluation of patient and healthcare provider satisfaction and use is planned for early 2017 to determine whether the use of the “5 Questions to Ask About Your Medications” has resulted in changes to practices of patients and healthcare providers.

Background/Context:

Patients are the constant in every transition of care and can be at high risk of adverse drug events, especially at discharge from hospital to home.¹ Knowing the right questions to ask can empower patients to be an active partner in their health and can help to mitigate risk of harm from medications.

- This project began with a patient story. Meet Emily. Her father had multiple medications to keep track of and Emily devised a set of questions to help him start the conversation about medications and feel confident as a partner in his own care.
- Emily was a participant at the National Medication Safety Summit (2014) held to accelerate the adoption of safe medication practices.
- A Medication Safety Action Plan was developed to create and disseminate a national medication safety checklist for patients and families at transitions in care.
- The 5 questions to ask were developed by patients and healthcare providers based on medication safety evidence and medication management themes including medication reconciliation (MedRec).

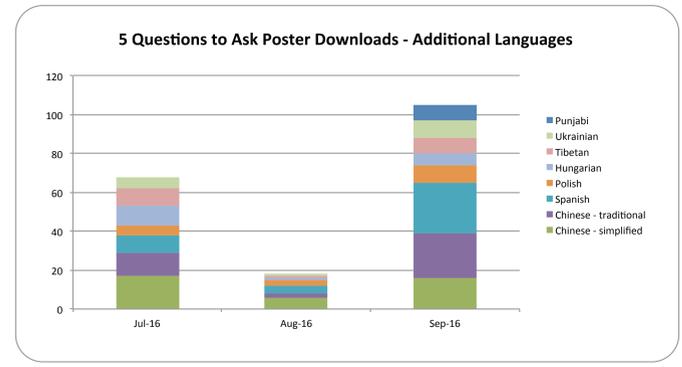
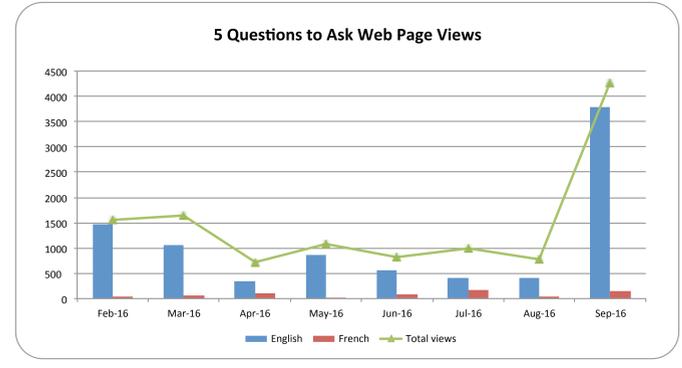
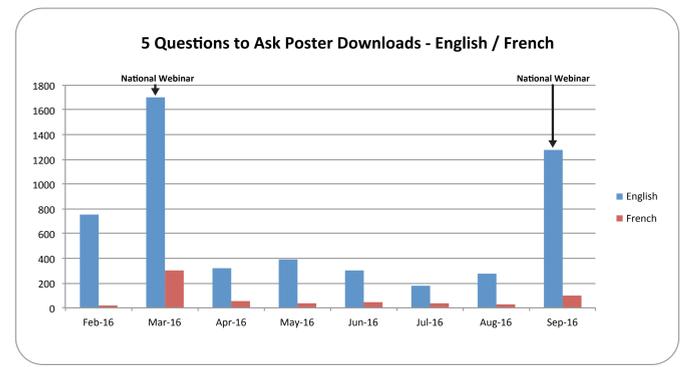
¹Cua YM, Kripalani S. Medication use in the transition from hospital to home. Ann Acad Med Singapore. 2008;37(2):136-6.

Conclusions/Spread:

“5 Questions to Ask About Your Medications” was designed collaboratively by patients and healthcare providers to empower and support patients to obtain the information needed to manage and use their medications safely. This campaign has been co-developed with patients and is being implemented and evaluated through collaborative partnerships. Further dissemination strategies designed to maximize patient access and use of the “5 Questions to Ask About Your Medications” in Canada and abroad are currently in progress.

Lessons Learned:

- The patient’s voice and their story are an essential part of why this campaign is so well received. Through partnership with Patients for Patient Safety Canada patients were involved from the very beginning and every step of the way from co-development to dissemination and evaluation.
- Giving organizations an opportunity to be a part of the campaign through their endorsement and customization of the “5 Questions to Ask About Your Medications” encourages them to embrace, brand and share the messages as their own to their own audiences.
- There are many ways to share the same message; making the message available in many formats, languages and platforms increases reach.
- Developing partnerships at provincial/territorial and national levels will enhance implementation and evaluation of the “5 Questions to Ask About Your Medications”.



We would like to gratefully acknowledge all of the participants of the National Medication Safety Summit (2014), the National Patient Safety Consortium, and specifically, Emily Lap Sum Musing and all endorsing organizations and their members.