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Improving the content, wording, structure & formatting of the NHS Injectable Medicines Guide (“Medusa”) with user testing

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Background & aim
- The NHS Injectable Medicines Guide (IMG) is used by nurses in >100 hospitals to guide the preparation & administration of IV medicines.
- Surveys suggest users find it too detailed & confusing.¹
- This may make it difficult to find relevant, unambiguous information & could lead to serious medication errors.
- We aimed to identify & resolve problems in two typical IMG guides via user testing².

User testing methods
- We recruited 30 nurses from three hospitals who regularly administer IV medicines.
- These nurses tested existing IMG guides for voriconazole & aminophylline (renamed bathicillin & unimycin) via 3 iterative rounds of 10 interviews, each followed by guide revision.
- Each interview included direct questions that we scored to determine whether each participant could find & understand 17 key points of information (KPIs, Table 1).
- Open questions then explored views on guide content & format (analysed thematically).
- The study was approved by the University of Bath Research Ethics Approval Committee for Health (EP 17/18 126) & the Health Research Authority (IRAS 235214).

Results
- The number of participants able to find & understand KPIs increased following revisions made between successive rounds of use (Figure 1 & Table 1).
- These improvements were the result of multiple changes to the content, wording, structure & formatting of the guides (Figure 2).

Conclusions
- The original guides performed poorly for several important KPIs.
- The user testing process improved guide performance in the interview context.
- An on-going randomised in situ simulation study will determine whether the user tested guide results in fewer preparation & administration errors in a ward environment.

References
1. Erskine et al. An assessment of the information provided to support healthcare staff to administer injectable medicines. UK Medicines Information Practice Development Seminar 2012.

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