**MEDICATION ERRORS IN CHEMOTHERAPY**

**WHAT ARE MEDICATION ERRORS**

A medication error is defined as error in the:

- ordering
- dispensing
- applying
- or monitoring of a drug.1

**HOW OFTEN DO MEDICATION ERRORS OCCUR**

- **7%** of adults
- **19%** of children

Taking chemotherapy drugs in outpatient clinics or at home were given the wrong dose or experienced other medication mistakes.2

**OCCURRENCE OF MEDICATION ERRORS2, 4**

- **42 – 91%** Preparation
- **4 – 8%** Application errors
- **1%** Prescription

**CONSEQUENCES FOR THE PATIENT2, 3**

- **Temporary injury** (e.g. abdominal pain, neuropathy, hypertension)
- **Permanent damage** (diseases of the heart, lungs or nerves; infertility)
- **Death** (e.g. due to excessive bone marrow suppression)

According to one study, the vast majority of errors (436 out of 449) were intercepted before medication reached the patients. But:

- **13.4%** of avoided errors would have resulted in temporary injury.
- **2.6%** would have resulted in permanent damage.
- **2.6%** would have compromised the vital prognosis of the patient.

Overall, 13 medication errors reached the patient without causing damage, although two patients required enhanced monitoring.

**CONSEQUENCES FOR THE HOSPITAL3**

- **216 additional days**
- **€ 92,907 estimated total**

Another study showed that medication errors lead to 216 additional days of hospitalisation and cost an estimated total of €92,907 per year.

**IN GENERAL**

Of all the drugs implicated in medication errors, antineoplastic drugs are the most commonly involved (52%).5

Sources: