Keeping an eye on medical devices

This independent non-profit organisation regularly evaluates medical devices the world over, ensuring that their quality is up to the mark. >3
Evaluating equipment

Medical equipment malfunctions are one of the top five causes of preventable medical errors, which in turn are the third most common cause of death in the United States.

“Usually, very potent drugs are given through these pumps, so a small deviation from dosage can have a big effect.

"These pumps are getting more connected, and with the shortage of qualified personnel using them, there is a high risk of user-device interaction problems."

New safety concerns

According to ECRI Institute’s 2019 report, there are 10 safety concerns for Healthcare Organizations, diagnostic errors and improper management of test results in electronic health records (EHRs) are among the most serious patient safety challenges facing healthcare leaders today.

Many healthcare providers rely on EHRs to help with clinical decision support, and tracking test results through technology is just one tool in the diagnostic process.

The institute’s list of concerns addresses systemic issues facing health systems, such as behaviouralist health concerns, clinician burnout and skills development.

Mobile health technology – number one on the list – opens up a world of opportunities by transporting healthcare to the home, but also presents challenges.

The report also highlights ongoing clinical issues with infections from peripheral intravenous (IV) lines, sepsis and anti-microbial stewardship.

In the outpatient setting, at least 30% of antibiotic use is unnecessary.

The list of patient safety concerns does not necessarily represent the issues that occur most frequently or are the most severe. It identifies new or re-emerging issues that may require additional solutions.

Two of Dr Schabacker’s biggest concerns involve sterile issues with ventilators and cybersecurity.

"Endoscopes are not made for single use, and we have had issues for years that there is a problem because of how they are designed, hence why they’re used and how they’re treated."

"There is a higher risk of contamination from one patient to another."

"With cybersecurity, there is the risk of being able to hack into medical devices and maliciously manipulate them so that they cause a risk."

"This is especially critical for clinical pacemakers and internal defibrillators."