DRUG MIX-UP KILLS PATIENT

Cause Map

Multiple opportunities to identify error missed

A patient passed away due to multiple organ failure when her bone marrow became unable to create blood cells as a result of an overdose of methotrexate. Methotrexate can damage blood cell counts and is primarily used to treat cancer and severe arthritis. The patient was administered a high dose of methotrexate, which was not prescribed for her.

"The most risky transition is from hospital to home with the additional need for home care services, and that's the one we know the least about."

- Alicia Arbaje, assistant professor, Johns Hopkins School of Medicine

1 Problem

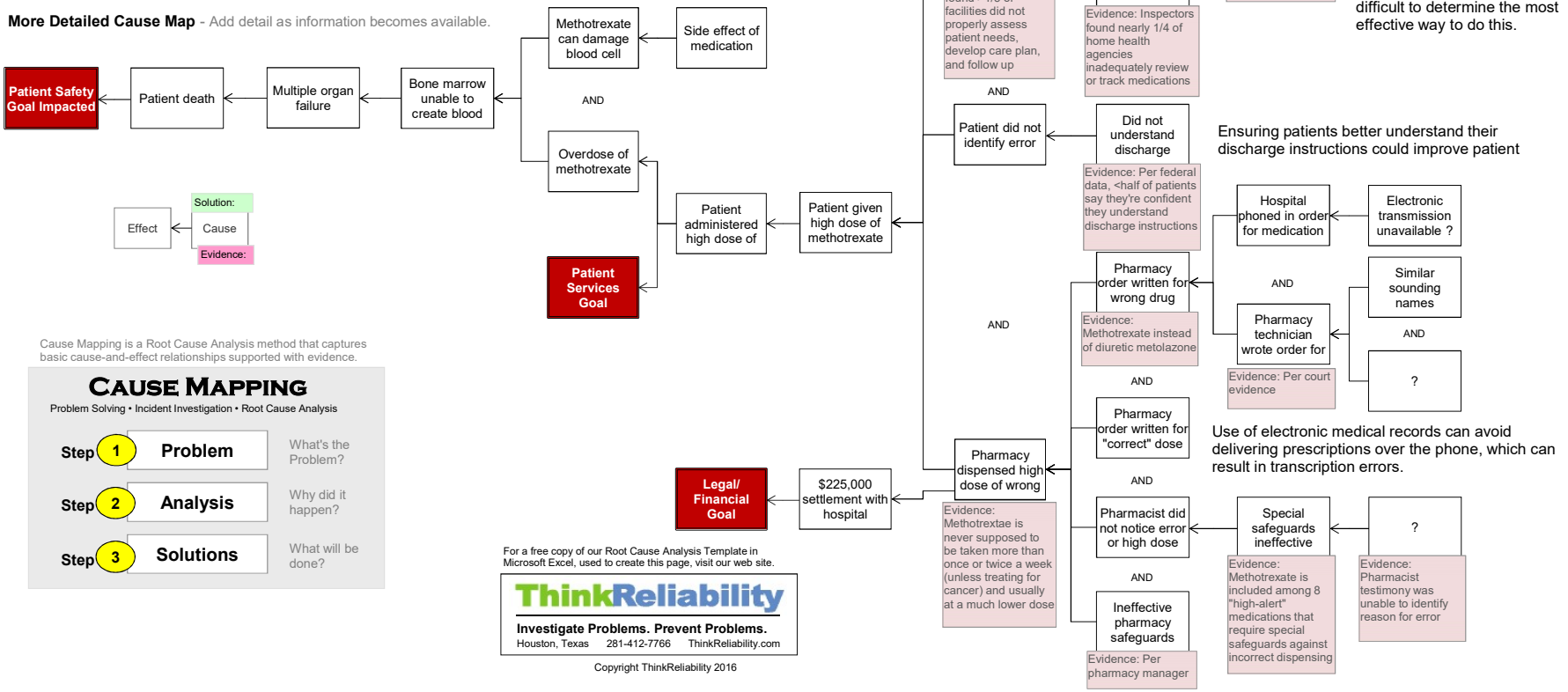
What	Problem(s)	Patient death, issues with hospital discharge
When	Date	October 2013
	Time	?
	Different, unusual, unique	Medications with similar names
Where	Facility, site	St. Joseph, MO
	Unit, area, equipment	Regional medical center
	Task being performed	Hospital discharge

Impact to the Goals

Patient Safety	Patient death	
Legal/ Financial	Settlement with hospital	$225,000
	Settlement with pharmacy	$125,000
Patient Services	Patient administered high dose of wrong drug	
	This incident	$350,000
Frequency	~1/4 of home health agencies inadequately reviewed or tracked medications for new patients	

2 Analysis

More Detailed Cause Map - Add detail as information becomes available.



3 Solutions

Several systemic issues were identified in this case and actions meant to improve these issues are still ongoing.

Improvements to home health care agencies to ensure their required tasks are being completed effectively is clearly needed, but it has been difficult to determine the most effective way to do this.

Ensuring patients better understand their discharge instructions could improve patient

Use of electronic medical records can avoid delivering prescriptions over the phone, which can result in transcription errors.

Cause Mapping is a Root Cause Analysis method that captures basic cause-and-effect relationships supported with evidence.

CAUSE MAPPING

Problem Solving • Incident Investigation • Root Cause Analysis

Step 1 **Problem** What's the Problem?

Step 2 **Analysis** Why did it happen?

Step 3 **Solutions** What will be done?

For a free copy of our Root Cause Analysis Template in Microsoft Excel, used to create this page, visit our web site.

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