



Using your Practice Management Software to Assist in the Completion of a Practice Audit

Software: Helix Practice Manager

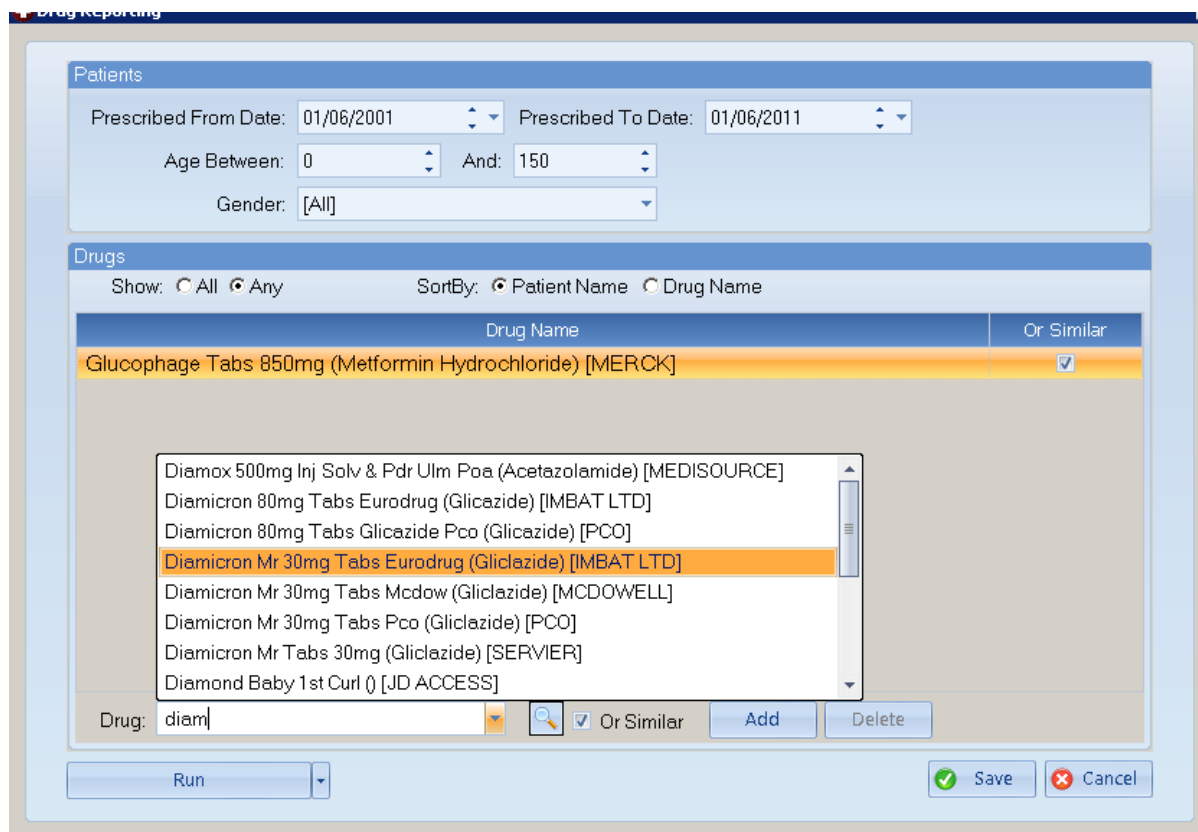
1. The ICGP Audit Toolkit written by Dr Claire Collins provides a very comprehensive overview of the audit cycle and is available for download from the ICGP website at www.icgp.ie/PC. It states that the first steps are to choose a topic for audit, define the aims and objectives of the audit project and identify a set of standards that the practice is going to measure itself against. A computer with internet access can be really helpful with this phase of the project. The ICGP audit toolkit gives several possible audit topics while there are a host of professional bodies and agencies where it is possible to look at best practice guidelines. These include:

The Irish College of General Practitioners	www.icgp.ie
The Royal College of General Practitioners	www.rcgp.org.uk
National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence	www.nice.org.uk
Scottish Intercollegiate Guidelines Network	www.sign.ac.uk

2. Having decided upon the condition to study it will now be necessary to identify patients with that condition. All of the certified practice management software products have the ability to find patients with particular diseases once these have been coded. If the practice has not been coding diseases then the task is a lot harder but it is still possible to do a drug search for medications that are linked with the condition. As an example, if the practice had not been coding type 2 diabetes patients but wanted to try to identify them, it could search the patient database for all of the common drugs used in managing Diabetes.

In the case of Helix Practice Manager, the search would begin by clicking on the “reports” section which will be one of the options on the menu bar at the top of the Helix Practice Manager (HPM) screen. This then presents a new screen with options to search for patient account details, attendance and other facets of practice. One of the options on offers is “drug”, clicking on this launches the medication search screen as shown below.

3. At the bottom of this screen is a button marked “new”, click on this to create a new medication search.
4. This presents the drug reporting screen as shown below. This allows the parameters of the search to be defined. The following boxes require completion in this section:
 - a. The “prescribed from” and “prescribed to” boxes seek the date range within which the drug was prescribed.
 - b. The “age range” boxes allow the search to be confined to patients within a specified age range.
 - c. The “gender” box has an associated drop down menu which allows the search to be confined to males, females or all patients.
 - d. The “show” section will ask the search to be carried out for patients on “any” of the drugs listed within the search or “all” of the drugs listed. If the “all” button is ticked then only patients taking all of the drugs included in the search will be retrieved by the search.



5. At the bottom of the screen is the “Drug” box where the name of the drug to be searched for is entered. Usually writing the first three letters of the drug name will generate a list of drugs of the same name. Selecting just one of these drugs from the list and then clicking the “Or Similar” box as shown above will broaden the search to all the different formulations and doses of the drug in question.
6. Having selected the drug from the list, clicking “Add” includes this drug (and similar dosages) into the search.
7. In the example shown above I have asked the computer to search for all patients on **either** Glucophage **or** Diamicon but it is possible to add several other drugs to the search in order to be sure all patients on diabetic drugs are captured in the search.
8. Clicking on the “Run” button then runs the search and should produce a word document with the names and contact details of patients taking the relevant drugs. It is also possible to produce a csv file or excel spreadsheet of the same information by clicking on the small down arrow beside the run button if a different file format is required.



It is of course a lot easier if the practice already has a disease register or patients with chronic diseases have been coded correctly. In this case, the search would again begin from the “Reports” section of the software as follows:

1. Click on the “Diagnosis” button to launch the diagnosis search page.
2. Click on “new” at the bottom of this page to create a new search.
3. Similar to the drug search as outlined above, complete the date range for the search, leave the gender set to “all” and consider restricting the age range from 18 to 100 in order to exclude children with Diabetes from your audit as these are usually managed by the hospital.
4. Again make sure that the “Any” button is selected as shown below:

The screenshot shows the 'Diagnosis Reporting' window. The 'Patients' section has the following filters: 'Diagnosed From Date' and 'Diagnosed To Date' both set to 01/06/2011; 'Age Between' set to 18 and 100; and 'Gender' set to [All]. The 'Medical Conditions' section has 'Show' set to 'Any' and 'SortBy' set to 'Patient Name'. A table lists conditions with their codes:

Condition Name	Code
DIABETES NON-INSULIN DEPENDENT	T90
Non-insulin-dependent diabetes mellitus without complications	E11.9
Non-insulin-dependent diabetes mellitus with multiple complications	E11.7

At the bottom, the 'Condition' box contains 'Non-insulin-dependent diabetes mellitus'. There are 'Add' and 'Delete' buttons next to it. At the very bottom, there is a 'Run' button, a 'Save' button with a green checkmark, and a 'Cancel' button with a red X.

5. In the condition box type the word diabetes and the system will offer a list of ICPC-2 and ICD 10 codes. Select the codes used by the practice to identify Diabetes patients and click “Add” to include these in the search.
6. Click on the “Run” button to run the report as before and consider saving the report for use later in your audit cycle.

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The list of patients generated by these reports can then be used for examining the aspects of Diabetes care the practice has chosen to review in the audit project. Other software applications such as Microsoft Excel can be used to easily store and analyse audit data. They can also be used to display information in charts which can then be used to enhance the report produced at the end of the audit cycle.