

It's time to advance technician roles and save on medication wastage

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Figure 1: Two weeks of returned medication waste.

Aim

To compare wastage audits before and after pharmacy assistant and pharmacist led nurse education and to gather evidence for an advanced scope pharmacy assistant ward role.

Methods

Over a 2 week period in February 2016 and 2018, all medication returned to pharmacy from the wards in a large metropolitan hospital was audited to identify unnecessary wastage. Pharmacy assistant and Pharmacist led education sessions on medication wastage took place across the hospital to 250 nursing staff during 2017. Findings from the 2018 audit were used to calculate cost savings. All costs were adjusted for inflation.

Results

The audits showed that compared to February 2016, medication wastage had reduced in 2018. The 2018 audit also identified wards within the hospital with the highest medication wastage cost, thus providing evidence for targeted re-education. The audits provided the evidence required to have a pilot advanced scope pharmacy assistant ward role approved. The role was designed to help reduce wastage on the geriatric ward, and was jointly funded by the geriatric unit and the pharmacy department.

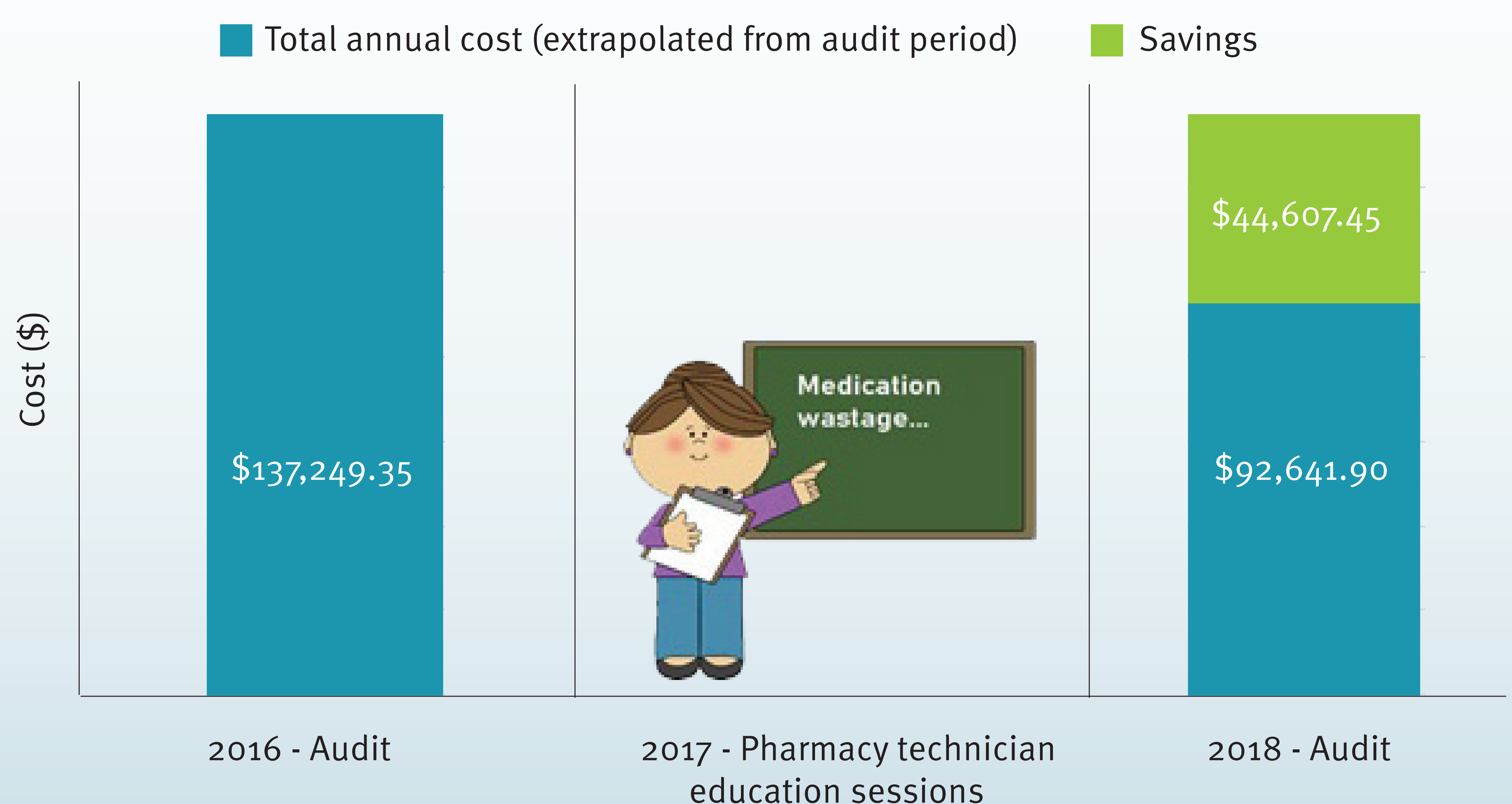


Figure 2: Outcome of pharmacy assistant led ward-based wastage education.

Conclusion

Pharmacy assistant and Pharmacist led education sessions on medication storage reduced wastage and saved the hospital money. The audit also highlighted the importance of pharmacy assistants and provided evidence to create an advanced scope pharmacy assistant ward role to help reduce wastage.