Guide for using barcodes on pharmaceutical products

Introduction

Pharmacies increasingly use robotics technology to optimise their product flow. Roughly one-third of Danish pharmacies currently use a pharmacy robot to handle pharmaceutical products, and the number is increasing. The pharmacies tend to opt for fully-automated pharmacy robotics solutions where the robot both stores and picks the products. This frees up many resources for pharmacies in their daily operations.

When the pharmacy receives a pharmaceutical product, the pharmacy robot scans the barcode on the product and subsequently measures the product dimensions in order to place the product on a correspondingly dimensioned storeroom shelf. When an item is ordered from the counter, the robot locates the pharmaceutical product and sends it to the counter.

Method

It is essential that pharmacy robots can read the barcode and measure the product dimensions. It is also important that the product packaging allows it to be sent to the pharmacy counter without damaging or opening the packaging, and without the medicine being dropped by the robot because it is difficult to handle the packaging.

BARCODE CHECKLIST FOR PHARMACY ROBOTS

1. Use the correct barcode type.

2. Do not use transparent outer packaging, as this will make it impossible for the robot to measure the dimensions.

3. Use a bar code type with clear, definable dimensions that allows the robot to measure the product.

4. The barcode should be placed in the wrong direction, and the scanner might have trouble reading it.

5. Do not use rectangular packaging, as this could make it difficult for robots to grip the packaging. The optimal packaging is curved or cylindrical.

6. Do not use triangular packaging, as this will make it difficult for robots to measure the product.

7. Do not use open packaging, as this could make it difficult for robots to grip the packaging.

8. Do not use asymmetric packaging, as this could make it difficult for robots to grip the packaging.

9. Do not use packaging with horizontal lines, as a scanner cannot read a horizontal line.

10. Do not use packaging with vertical lines, as this will make it difficult for robots to measure the product.

11. Do not use packaging with horizontal lines, as this will make it difficult for robots to measure the product.

12. Do not use packaging with vertical lines, as this will make it difficult for robots to measure the product.

13. Do not use packaging with horizontal lines, as this will make it difficult for robots to measure the product.

14. Place the barcode on the front of the box.

15. Do not place the barcode under shrink foil, welding seams, or perforations, etc.

16. Do not place the barcode close to or around corners.

A GUIDE TO USING BARCODES FOR PHARMACY ROBOTS

This guideline shows what manufacturers of pharmaceuticals should avoid when packaging pharmaceutical products which may be handled by pharmacy robots, to make sure the packages can be handled effectively by pharmacy robots. If this guideline can be downloaded at: http://doc.gs1.eu/