Using the GTIN to establish the essential link between healthcare items, pack sizes and product information to enable improved patient safety

The HSE conduct a comprehensive barcode scanning exercise in the National Distribution Centre (NDC) to audit existing product data and map it to the barcode information printed on the product packaging.

Did you know?
Did you know it will soon be a regulatory requirement for all pharmaceuticals and medical devices to have a unique identifier/barcode printed on the packaging?

Benefits of using Global Trade Item Numbers (GTINs)
- Provides a unique product identifier across the HSE
- Enables mapping of data from various systems
- Enables creation of a national product file for the HSE
- Improves accuracy of product data
- Provides a foundation for scanning processes in logistics and at point of care
- Supports patient level costing and aggregated data analysis

Process
- GS1 Scanning App used to scan all products in the National Distribution Centre
- Scanned GTIN linked to existing product data
- Barcode report generated and used to assist discussions with individual suppliers

Results
- 79% of products in the National Distribution Centre (NDC) have a GS1 GTIN/barcode
- 43% of these barcodes have expiry information within the barcode

Next steps
- Include GTIN in HSE SAP system
- Include request for information on unique identifier in tender documents to suppliers
- Products from other warehouses to be scanned to build a national product file (removes duplication)

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“The adoption of GS1 standards is viewed as a very important priority to ensure best practices and safety for patients.”

John Swords, Head of Procurement, HSE