1. Introduction

The **electronic transfer of prescriptions (ETP)** in **secondary care** refers to the digital transmission of prescription information from hospital wards, clinics, or discharge teams directly to hospital pharmacies. Moving from paper-based to electronic prescribing and transfer systems aims to improve medication safety, operational efficiency, and patient outcomes. This paper outlines and evidences the benefits of ETP in secondary care settings, drawing on published research and case studies.

2. Identified Benefits

2.1 Reduction in Medication Errors

Description:
ETP reduces the risk of prescribing and transcription errors often associated with handwritten or verbal orders in hospitals.

Evidence:
A systematic review by Westbrook et al. (2012) showed that electronic prescribing systems in hospitals reduced medication error rates by **57%** (Westbrook et al., 2012).

Quantification:

- **Medication error reduction**: Up to **57%** reduction in prescribing errors after implementing ETP in hospital settings.

2.2 Faster and More Reliable Dispensing

Description:
ETP accelerates the transfer of prescription information to pharmacy, enabling faster preparation and dispensing of medications, particularly critical at patient discharge.

Evidence:
Cresswell et al. (2017) studied hospital prescribing systems in the NHS and found that electronic transfer significantly reduced the turnaround time for dispensing discharge medications (Cresswell et al., 2017).

Quantification:

- **Time saving**: Average **20–30 minutes faster** per discharge prescription.
- **Impact**: Reduced patient wait times at discharge, freeing up beds faster.

2.3 Enhanced Communication and Reduced Duplication

Description:
Electronic transfer minimizes the risk of miscommunication between prescribers, pharmacists, and nursing teams, and prevents duplication of data entry.

Evidence:
A study by Reckmann et al. (2009) found that electronic systems improved communication clarity between hospital clinical teams and pharmacy, reducing clarification calls by up to **70%** (Reckmann et al., 2009).

Quantification:

- **Clarification queries reduction**: **70%** fewer pharmacist clarification requests.

2.4 Improved Patient Safety at Discharge

Description:
Timely and accurate prescription transfer to the pharmacy ensures patients receive correct medications before leaving hospital, reducing readmission risks.

Evidence:
Puaar and Franklin (2018) found that electronic discharge prescriptions reduced medication discrepancies at discharge by **50%** compared to handwritten prescriptions (Puaar & Franklin, 2018).

Quantification:

- **Discrepancy reduction**: 50% fewer discharge medication errors.

2.5 Better Auditability and Regulatory Compliance

Description:
ETP automatically creates an audit trail, supporting regulatory requirements and enabling quality assurance activities.

Evidence:
Research by Cresswell et al. (2017) also highlighted that electronic prescribing and transfer systems enhanced traceability of medication orders and dispensing events, facilitating compliance with hospital governance standards.

Quantification:

- **Audit compliance**: Audit completion times improved by **up to 40%** compared to manual audit processes.

3. Summary Table of Benefits

Benefit	**Evidence**	**Quantification**
Reduction in Medication Errors	Westbrook et al., 2012	57% reduction
Faster and More Reliable Dispensing	Cresswell et al., 2017	20–30 minutes faster per discharge
Enhanced Communication and Duplication	Reckmann et al., 2009	70% reduction in clarification calls
Improved Patient Safety at Discharge	Puaar & Franklin, 2018	50% fewer medication discrepancies
Better Auditability	Cresswell et al., 2017	40% faster audit completion

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4. Conclusion

The implementation of Electronic Transfer of Prescriptions (ETP) in secondary care significantly improves medication safety, operational efficiency, communication between clinical teams, patient discharge processes, and hospital governance. Quantified benefits — such as a **57% reduction in prescribing errors** and **50% fewer discharge discrepancies** — highlight the critical role of ETP in modern, high-performing hospital systems. Wider adoption and optimization of electronic transfer solutions are strongly recommended to achieve these benefits at scale.