

GS1 Standards in Healthcare

Making a difference in the Healthcare Supply Chain

GS1 Healthcare envisions a future where the Healthcare sector utilizes GS1 global standards for all items, locations, people and processes, to drive patient safety and supply chain efficiency improvements – starting with procedures or treatments for a specific patient.

By Amr Khattab - GS1 Egypt

GS1 Healthcare is a voluntary, global user community bringing together healthcare stakeholders and leading the healthcare sector towards the development and implementation of global standards to enhance patient safety and supply chain efficiency.

Healthcare is by nature a global sector. Regarding the fact that it is an information intensive industry with supply chains that often cross borders, a standardized system for traceability from product manufacture to patient treatment, is imperative to comply with the increasing legal requirements for product traceability regionally, and globally.

Throughout the Healthcare sector, adopting & implementing GS1 standards, enable the effective and efficient roll-out of automatic identification and traceability systems throughout the Healthcare sector.

Main Challenges Facing the Healthcare Supply Chain

Hospitals, caregivers, pharmaceutical manufacturers, and distributors as well as pharmacy chains and all other stakeholders in the healthcare supply chain, are seeking a standardized way to improve business visibility throughout the supply chain in order to face main threats and problems occurring up and downstream.

Some challenges ...

- **Counterfeited drugs ...** “The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that in many countries in the region, more than 30% of medicines on sale can be counterfeit”

GS1 Solution ... The introduction of a standardized **RFID based system** to help uniquely identifying drugs and all healthcare products at all packaging levels, from finished goods at the manufacturer’s to the end of treatment at the healthcare facility, enabling authentication and traceability systems, and making the process much more difficult for counterfeiters to intrude

into the Healthcare supply chain, or at least, make it uneconomic.

One of these medicines is fake.
Can you tell which?



 SAFEMEDICINES.org

- **Medication errors ...** Medication error adverse events can occur every day in every hospital worldwide and are drawing increasing media attention. They can have far reaching consequences which can include: additional treatment, disabilities (temporary or permanent), or even in extreme cases – death.

Several studies, in different countries, indicate that adverse effects from medication errors represent a significant problem for Healthcare worldwide.

USA – medical errors in hospitals result in presentable adverse event with up to 98,000 patients dying each year, which costs the sector US\$ 138 to 192 billion annually. Medication errors account for 7,000 of these deaths.

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GS1 Solution ... Standardized **RFID based system** can automatically match the ***right patient*** with the ***right treatment***

. Automatic Identification and Data Capture (AIDC) systems significantly reduce the risk of medication dosage errors and allow caregivers to focus on what really matters: ***patient care.***



- ***Managing medical supplies ...*** Caregivers need to quickly and efficiently find medical

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supplies and equipment, as to be able to provide optimal patient care and reduce time spent on searching.

In the UK, nurses spend 26 days each year (per nurse) on hunting for missing supplies and equipment, equaling almost **one billion Sterling pounds!** of nurses' wages, which represents a burdening overhead for the overall Healthcare supply chain in England.

GS1 Solution ... GS1 EPC-global/RFID data carrier enables real time view of stock levels of medical supplies and electronic records to track the location of equipment, allowing caregivers to have the ***right items available at the right time***, while spending more time in patient care.



- **Patient identification ...** For patient identification, it is efficient to track and trace patient reports and records of treatments in a fast, simple, and secure way, in order to manage all patient's present and historical data (if existing) with a smooth and accurate process.

GS1 Solution ... Wrist bands with RFID tags would have the patient's unique number in a scannable form linking that patient to their electronically-stored medical records. RFID tags could be reprogrammable to ensure vital medical information is carried with the patient at every point of their hospital stay, updated for each treatment, blood transfusions, and surgeries as well as all other transactions.



Conclusion

Adopting and implementing the GS1 EPC-global/RFID based system of standards in the Healthcare sector enables healthcare stakeholders throughout the whole supply chain to realize all over benefits that will increase efficiency, save costs of wasted administration time spent, eliminate paper work, reduce medication errors, and prevent counterfeiting ... **Most importantly, saving more lives.**

We're not clinicians but healthcare is definitely becoming core business for GS1 in Egypt and around the world.

About GS1 and GS1 Healthcare

GS1 is a neutral, not-for-profit organization dedicated to the design and implementation of global standards and solutions to improve the efficiency and visibility in supply chains. GS1 is driven by more than a million companies, who execute more than seven billion transactions a day with the GS1 system of standards. GS1 is truly global, with local member organizations in 111 countries, with the global office in Brussels, Belgium.

GS1 Healthcare is a global, voluntary healthcare user group developing global standards for the healthcare supply chain and advancing global harmonization.

GS1 Healthcare consists of participants from all stakeholders of the Healthcare supply chain: manufacturers, wholesalers and distributors, as well as hospitals and pharmacy retailers. GS1 Healthcare also maintains close contacts with regulatory agencies and trade organizations worldwide.

About GS1 Egypt

GS1 Egypt ... A GS1 member organization (MO) located in Cairo, Egypt since 1996. GS1 Egypt is acting as a neutral leader to the local market, carrying the very good intentions of delivering all the knowledge and tools needed for the adoption and implementation of the GS1 system of standards. GS1 Egypt is helping the local community along with giving advice and consulting activities to all sectors in order to reach effective application levels of the GS1 system of standards.

References

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- Publication of the GS1 standard for the Automatic Identification and Data Capture (AIDC) of medical products – January 2010

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