Biomedical and Health Informatics Lecture Series

Tuesday, February 10, 2009
Room T-531, 12:00 - 12:50 p.m.

James A. Taylor, M.D.
Professor of Pediatrics
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"Computerized Physician Order Entry: Does it really reduce medication errors?"

Medical errors are a major public health problem in the United States. Technologies such as the electronic medical record and computerized physician order entry (CPOE) have been recommended as methods to reduce errors. In this talk I will focus on evaluating the efficacy of CPOE in reducing medication errors. In addition to highlighting the difficulties of measuring medical errors in general, I will discuss different methods for collecting data on medication errors and the problems with each of these techniques. Much of the talk will be devoted to reviewing a study that we conducted in which the rates of medication errors (or more correctly, variances) before and after the implementation of CPOE in a neonatal intensive care unit were compared (Taylor et al, Pediatrics 2008;121:123-128). In the study we found that the rate of medication variance dropped from 19.8% in the pre-CPOE period to 11.6% after implementation. The results of our project will be in the context of other studies on CPOE and the implications for improving patient safety will be discussed.

James A. Taylor, M.D. is professor of Pediatrics at the University of Washington. His major research interest is improving outcomes of individual encounters between health care providers and pediatric patients. Dr. Taylor is Medical Director of the University of Washington Medical Center Newborn Nursery and was the Principal Investigator for the University of Washington Developmental Center of Evaluation and Research in Pediatric Patient Safety.

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