



# Strengthening medication safety in Danish municipalities – a mapping of challenges

## Authors

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**A study mapping the challenges of medicine-related tasks in Danish municipalities. The results will contribute to the discussion of how pharmacy technicians from community pharmacies can support strengthening of medication safety in the municipalities in cooperation with municipal employees.**

## Background

68 pct. (2021) of registered unintentional accidents in municipal institutions are due to medicine management. Until now no studies have identified which challenges with medicine-related tasks are experienced in the municipalities.

**Cover interviews with 27 managers and visual storytelling interviews with 17 employees from ten municipalities in Denmark**

*"We hardly have any patients who do not take some form of medicine anymore, and we no longer have patients who only take two or three types of medicine, we actually have patients who take – yes – 20-30 different types of medicine. (...) I think we did not have this type of complex patients years ago."*  
(manager)

## Results

- There are challenges in several steps of the medication process
- Compliance with existing procedures and instructions related to medication handling is difficult
- Observation of effects and side effects of medication for adults and children is difficult
- Medication during transitions is a challenge
- Medicine-related issues vary in disease-preventing and health-promoting activities at municipal health care centres
- The right competence for the right task

## Examples from the visual storytelling interviews with municipal employees about their perience of challenges concerning medication:



Picture 1: Many different employees with different skills are helping the patient, and the different educated employees need to work together and use the right skill for the right task.



Picture 2: Patients feel they are falling between two chairs in the health care system, because they experience a lack of responsibility for the medicine from physicians.



Picture 3: It can be difficult for a home care nurse to follow the standards for safe practice in the management and administration of medicines because of mess at the patient's home.



Picture 4: There is a lot to take care of in the management and administration of medicines. It's like carrying a heavy load.



Figure 1: The ideas of how pharmacy technicians can contribute to the medical safety in the municipalities generated at a workshop with stakeholders.

## Conclusion

This study identified six major categories that illustrate the challenges of medicine-related tasks as they are experienced by municipal managers and employees and generated ideas of how pharmacy technicians from community pharmacies can contribute to medication safety in municipalities.