

Understanding and Enhancing Medication Safety During COVID-19: The CONNECTS (COVID-Nineteen Medication Safety) Toolkit

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Medicines are the most common intervention in primary healthcare. The COVID-19 pandemic led to rapid and fundamental changes to long-established practices of safe prescribing, dispensing, and management of medicines in Ireland. Supported by legislative and policy amendments, the introduction of telehealth, electronic prescribing, and home medicines delivery are among many innovations designed to prevent spread of COVID-19 in healthcare facilities. While these approaches have clear benefit in minimising infection risk, they reduce the opportunity for traditional face-to-face interaction and informal communication between patients and healthcare professionals about safe medicines use. As the pandemic is still evolving the impact of these changes on medication safety is not yet clear.

This project aims to develop a toolkit for patients and healthcare professionals in primary care (general practice and community pharmacy) to support medication safety and facilitate clear communication about medicines even when care is being delivered remotely. The CONNECTS (COVID-19 Medication Safety) project will use a participatory methodology combining human-centred design and traditional research methods to develop an open-source, high-impact, low-cost, easily implementable toolkit that connects patients and healthcare professionals with evidence-based tools and resources to support safe medicines use.