

Avoiding Common Mistakes: A Quick Guide



Educate yourself on 9 of the most common pitfalls encountered by RMOs and ensure that when they inevitably happen, you have the right support to protect yourself and your patients.

1. Not learning from your mistakes.



Try to spot them before they have an effect or fix them as soon as they occur. Add the learning to your practice.

2. Failure to gain informed consent.



Your patient must understand the treatment and any side effects **before** proceeding with the treatment.

3. Not working as a team.



Not working as a team with colleagues, nurses and allied health professionals. Take advantage of their knowledge and support, you cannot be everywhere all the time.

4. Poor record keeping.



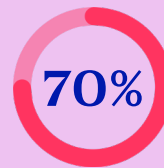
Patient notes must be clear, concise, accurate and legible. If an adverse event occurs, you will be relying on your notes. Retrospective corrections must be clearly marked as an alteration with the date and your name.

5. Unclear prescribing.



Errors can occur from prescribing the wrong:

- Drug
- Dose
- Administration route
- Frequency
- Duration
- Co-existing treatments



Watch out for allergies and extra zeros in dosages. 70% of medication errors are the result of prescription errors. Make any numbers and drug abbreviations clear and unambiguous.

6. Breaching confidentiality.



When you are talking to colleagues about patients, be aware that people can overhear. Be circumspect and reasonably soft-spoken.

7. Social media: it's a medical minefield.



Sharing images or details about patients, even the tiniest bit of data, can breach patient confidentiality and lead to serious disciplinary measures.

You can't completely "delete" a mistake once it has been posted. If in doubt, don't post it. The smallest detail in an image can lead to a patient being identified.

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8. Misdiagnosis.



Common causes:

- Similar symptoms
- Multiple issues
- Poor communication

There is a wide range of opportunities to miss a problem or misdiagnose an existing condition.

Such issues can lead to complications... even death.

LISTEN ↔ FOLLOW-UP

Make this a part of every patient contact, no matter how much of a rush you are in.



Tell your patients about any red flags to look for **before** they are discharged.

9. Dehumanising: it's dangerous.



When you are around illness, death and stress all day, every day, you can become hardened to your fellow human's distress.

Don't let this affect the way you treat your patients. Rushing them or not taking their concerns seriously can lead to complaints.

Ensure the patient feels like they are a part of the process, not just a problem or a health issue.

What to do if you receive a complaint:

Contact your indemnity provider as soon as you receive a complaint.

A medico-legal expert will assist you through the process. Follow their advice, they are there to represent you, not your employer.

NZMII will always assist you with an experienced lawyer.

As complaints can be stressful, NZMII Indemnity Insurance offers support.

NZMII RMOs can access mental health tools and up to six sessions of counselling per year through our partner Clearhead.

Check out the [wellbeing page](#) on our website for more information.

NZMII are here to help!

[Contact Us](#)

Contact us if you have any questions about your medical indemnity cover:

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