

A Comprehensive Review of Risk Management in the Medical Device Industry

Abstract:

The medical device industry is highly regulated, with a focus on ensuring the safety and effectiveness of medical devices. Risk management is a critical aspect of the medical device industry, involving the identification, assessment, and control of potential risks associated with medical devices. This paper provides a comprehensive review of risk management in the medical device industry, including its history, current regulatory framework, and key principles and processes. The paper examines the different types of risks associated with medical devices and explores various risk management techniques and tools used by medical device manufacturers. Additionally, the paper discusses the importance of post-market surveillance and risk monitoring, as well as the role of clinical evaluations in risk management. The paper concludes by highlighting emerging trends and future directions in risk management for the medical device industry. Overall, this comprehensive review provides a valuable resource for medical device manufacturers, regulators, and other stakeholders interested in risk management in the medical device industry.

Keywords: Risk Management, Medical Device, ISO 14971, FMEA

Introduction:

The medical device industry plays a critical role in improving the health and wellbeing of people around the world. However, with the development of increasingly complex medical devices, there is a growing need for effective risk management to ensure the safety and efficacy of these devices. The ISO 14971 and EUMDR 2017/745 guidelines provide a comprehensive framework for risk management in the medical device industry. These guidelines emphasize the need for a proactive and systematic approach to risk management that spans the entire lifecycle of a medical device, from conception to post-market surveillance. This article explores the key concepts of risk management as per the ISO 14971 and EUMDR 2017/745 guidelines and highlights the importance of effective risk management in ensuring the safety and efficacy of medical devices for patients and users[1][2].

The medical device industry is an essential part of the healthcare system, with medical devices ranging from simple tools such as thermometers and syringes to complex devices such as pacemakers, implantable devices, and diagnostic imaging equipment. However, as medical devices become more complex, the risks associated with their use also increase. Therefore, it is

essential to implement effective risk management processes to ensure the safety and efficacy of medical devices throughout their lifecycle.

The ISO 14971 and EUMDR 2017/745 guidelines provide a comprehensive framework for risk management in the medical device industry. These guidelines emphasize the need for manufacturers to identify potential hazards associated with their devices, assess the risks, and implement measures to mitigate those risks. The guidelines also mandate ongoing post-market surveillance activities to monitor the safety and efficacy of medical devices in the market[3][4].

The ISO 14971 standard outlines the requirements for risk management in the medical device industry. The standard requires manufacturers to establish and maintain a risk management process throughout the entire lifecycle of a medical device, from initial concept to post-market surveillance. This process includes risk identification, risk analysis, risk evaluation, risk control, and risk communication. The ultimate goal of the risk management process is to minimize the potential harm to patients and users of medical devices[5].

The EUMDR 2017/745 regulation is the European Union's new regulation for medical devices, which outlines the requirements for medical device risk management. The regulation includes provisions for risk management at various stages, including design and development, manufacturing, and post-market surveillance. The regulation mandates that manufacturers conduct clinical evaluations and post-market surveillance activities to ensure the ongoing safety and efficacy of their products[6].

Effective risk management is critical to ensuring the safety and efficacy of medical devices for patients and users. Manufacturers who implement effective risk management processes can minimize potential hazards associated with their devices, thereby reducing the risk of adverse events and improving patient outcomes.

Importance of Risk Management in the Medical Device Industry

The medical device industry has a critical responsibility to ensure the safety and efficacy of medical devices, as they play a crucial role in the healthcare system. Medical devices range from simple tools to complex devices, and their increasing complexity creates a growing need for effective risk management. Risk management is essential to minimize potential harm to patients and users of medical devices.

Effective risk management in the medical device industry can provide several benefits, such as:

1. **Improved patient safety:** Risk management processes can help identify potential hazards associated with medical devices, assess their risks, and implement measures to mitigate those risks, ultimately improving patient safety.
2. **Compliance with regulations:** Compliance with regulatory requirements is critical to the success of medical device manufacturers. Adhering to risk management guidelines such as ISO 14971 and EUMDR 2017/745 ensures compliance with regulatory requirements, thereby avoiding penalties and legal issues.

3. **Reduced liability:** By implementing effective risk management processes, manufacturers can minimize the potential for harm to patients and users of medical devices. This, in turn, can help reduce liability and protect the reputation of the manufacturer.
4. **Improved product quality:** Effective risk management can also help improve the quality of medical devices, thereby enhancing their efficacy and reliability.

Effective risk management is critical to ensuring the safety and efficacy of medical devices, maintaining compliance with regulations, reducing liability, and improving product quality. Risk management is an essential aspect of ensuring the safety and efficacy of medical devices. Medical devices are critical components of modern healthcare, and they can have a significant impact on patient outcomes. Therefore, it is crucial to identify, evaluate, and control the risks associated with these devices throughout their entire life cycle. Effective risk management in the medical device industry can help manufacturers to:

1. Improve patient safety by identifying and mitigating potential risks associated with the use of medical devices.
2. Increase the quality and reliability of medical devices by implementing robust risk management processes.
3. Reduce the likelihood of device failures and adverse events, which can save lives and reduce healthcare costs.
4. Ensure compliance with regulatory requirements and standards such as ISO 14971 and EUMDR 2017/745 guidelines.
5. Enhance the reputation and trust of the manufacturer and its products by demonstrating a commitment to patient safety and quality.

Risk management is a critical component of the medical device industry, and it is essential to ensure that all medical devices are safe, effective, and reliable. Manufacturers must implement proactive and systematic risk management processes throughout the entire product life cycle to identify and mitigate potential risks and ensure patient safety[1][2].

ISO 14971 Guidelines for Risk Management in the Medical Device Industry

The ISO 14971 guidelines provide a comprehensive framework for risk management in the medical device industry. These guidelines are essential to minimize potential hazards associated with medical devices, assess their risks, and implement measures to mitigate those risks. The ISO 14971 guidelines have five key stages that manufacturers should follow:

1. **Risk Identification:** The first stage involves identifying potential hazards associated with the medical device. This process involves collecting information from various sources, including users, clinical experts, and literature reviews. Manufacturers must identify all

potential hazards associated with their medical devices, no matter how small they may seem.

2. **Risk Analysis:** The second stage involves analyzing the identified hazards to determine their potential impact on patients and users of the medical device. This process helps prioritize the identified hazards based on their severity and likelihood of occurrence.
3. **Risk Evaluation:** The third stage involves evaluating the risks associated with the medical device to determine if they are acceptable or require further mitigation. The risk evaluation process considers the severity of harm, the likelihood of occurrence, and the overall risk-benefit ratio.
4. **Risk Control:** The fourth stage involves implementing measures to mitigate the identified risks. These measures can include design modifications, labeling changes, or the development of additional safety features. Manufacturers must ensure that the implemented measures are effective in mitigating the identified risks.
5. **Risk Communication:** The final stage involves communicating the identified risks and their mitigation measures to relevant stakeholders, including healthcare professionals, patients, regulatory authorities, and the public. Effective risk communication is critical to ensuring that all stakeholders have accurate and timely information about the medical device's potential risks.

Therefore, the ISO 14971 guidelines provide a systematic approach to risk management in the medical device industry. By following these guidelines, manufacturers can identify potential hazards associated with their medical devices, assess their risks, implement measures to mitigate those risks, and communicate them to relevant stakeholders[1].

EUMDR 2017/745 Guidelines for Risk Management in the Medical Device Industry

The European Medical Devices Regulation (EUMDR) 2017/745 provides a comprehensive framework for risk management in the medical device industry in the European Union (EU). The EUMDR guidelines have four key stages that manufacturers should follow[7][8][9]:

1. **Design and Development:** The first stage involves identifying potential hazards associated with the medical device during the design and development phase. This process requires manufacturers to consider the intended use of the device, its target population, and potential misuse scenarios. Manufacturers must also identify risks associated with the device's materials, software, and other components.
2. **Manufacturing:** The second stage involves implementing quality control measures to ensure that the medical device is manufactured according to the design specifications. This process requires manufacturers to develop and implement procedures to prevent or mitigate risks associated with the manufacturing process.

3. **Post-Market Surveillance:** The third stage involves monitoring the performance of the medical device after it has been placed on the market. Manufacturers must implement procedures to collect and analyze data related to the device's safety and performance. This includes monitoring adverse events, complaints, and any changes in the device's design or manufacturing.
4. **Clinical Evaluations:** The fourth stage involves conducting clinical evaluations of the medical device to ensure its safety and efficacy. This process involves collecting and analyzing clinical data to support the device's intended use and assess any potential risks associated with its use.

The EUMDR 2017/745 guidelines provide a comprehensive approach to risk management in the medical device industry in the European Union. By following these guidelines, manufacturers can identify potential hazards associated with their medical devices during the design and development phase, implement quality control measures during manufacturing, monitor the device's safety and performance after it has been placed on the market, and conduct clinical evaluations to ensure its safety and efficacy[2].

Proactive and Systematic Approach to Risk Management

A proactive and systematic approach to risk management is essential in the medical device industry to ensure the safety and efficacy of medical devices. Such an approach involves identifying potential hazards associated with the medical device and taking measures to mitigate those risks before they occur[25].

A proactive approach to risk management involves designing medical devices with safety in mind. This approach requires manufacturers to identify potential hazards during the design and development phase and implement measures to mitigate those risks before the device is placed on the market. Manufacturers should also consider potential misuse scenarios and develop devices that are resistant to such misuse.

A systematic approach to risk management involves following established guidelines, such as ISO 14971 and EUMDR 2017/745, to ensure that all potential hazards associated with the medical device are identified, analyzed, evaluated, and controlled. Manufacturers should also implement a quality management system that includes risk management processes to ensure that risks are continuously monitored and mitigated throughout the device's lifecycle[22][23][24].

A proactive and systematic approach to risk management can provide several benefits, including:

1. **Improved patient safety:** By identifying and mitigating potential hazards associated with medical devices, manufacturers can improve patient safety and reduce the risk of harm.
2. **Compliance with regulations:** Adhering to established guidelines, such as ISO 14971 and EUMDR 2017/745, can help manufacturers comply with regulatory requirements and avoid penalties and legal issues.

3. **Reduced liability:** By implementing effective risk management processes, manufacturers can reduce the potential for harm to patients and users of medical devices, thereby reducing liability and protecting their reputation.
4. **Improved product quality:** A systematic approach to risk management can help improve the quality of medical devices, resulting in more reliable and effective devices.

A proactive and systematic approach to risk management is essential in the medical device industry to ensure the safety and efficacy of medical devices. Such an approach involves identifying potential hazards, mitigating those risks before they occur, and continuously monitoring and mitigating risks throughout the device's lifecycle.

Ongoing Post-Market Surveillance

Ongoing post-market surveillance is a critical aspect of risk management in the medical device industry. It involves monitoring the safety and performance of medical devices that have already been placed on the market to detect potential issues and take corrective action, if necessary. The goal of post-market surveillance is to ensure that medical devices remain safe and effective throughout their entire lifecycle[5].

Post-market surveillance is essential because it allows manufacturers to monitor the performance of their medical devices in real-world settings, where unexpected issues or risks may arise. This monitoring process involves collecting data on adverse events, complaints, and any changes in the device's design or manufacturing that could impact its safety or performance. The data collected during post-market surveillance can then be used to improve the safety and effectiveness of medical devices[10][11].

The following are some key activities involved in ongoing post-market surveillance:

1. **Adverse event reporting:** Manufacturers are required to report any adverse events associated with their medical devices to regulatory authorities. This information is used to monitor the safety of medical devices and identify potential risks.
2. **Complaint handling:** Manufacturers must have a process in place to handle complaints related to their medical devices. Complaint data can be analyzed to identify potential issues and take corrective action.
3. **Device tracking:** Manufacturers must have a system in place to track medical devices throughout their lifecycle. This allows manufacturers to identify patterns of device failure or adverse events and take corrective action.
4. **Post-market clinical follow-up:** Manufacturers may be required to conduct post-market clinical follow-up studies to monitor the safety and effectiveness of their medical devices.

By conducting ongoing post-market surveillance, manufacturers can identify and mitigate potential risks associated with their medical devices. This helps to ensure that medical devices remain safe and effective throughout their entire lifecycle, which is critical for patient safety and regulatory compliance.

Ensuring Safety and Efficacy of Medical Devices

Ensuring the safety and efficacy of medical devices is a critical aspect of risk management in the medical device industry. Medical devices play a crucial role in diagnosing, treating, and managing various medical conditions. Therefore, it is essential that these devices are safe and effective for use by healthcare professionals and patients.

To ensure the safety and efficacy of medical devices, manufacturers must follow a comprehensive approach to risk management throughout the device's entire lifecycle. This approach involves several key activities[12][13][14]:

1. **Design and development:** Manufacturers must design and develop medical devices with safety and efficacy in mind. This involves identifying potential hazards and risks associated with the device and implementing measures to mitigate those risks.
2. **Testing and verification:** Medical devices must undergo rigorous testing and verification to ensure that they meet safety and performance standards. This includes testing for reliability, durability, and accuracy.
3. **Clinical evaluation:** Medical devices must be evaluated through clinical studies to demonstrate their safety and efficacy in real-world settings. This involves testing the device on patients and collecting data on its performance[15].
4. **Regulatory approval:** Medical devices must receive regulatory approval from agencies such as the FDA or EU before they can be placed on the market. These agencies review the device's safety and efficacy data to ensure that it meets regulatory requirements.
5. **Post-market surveillance:** Ongoing post-market surveillance is essential to monitor the safety and performance of medical devices and identify potential issues or risks.

By following a comprehensive approach to risk management, manufacturers can ensure that medical devices are safe and effective for use by healthcare professionals and patients. This is critical for protecting patient safety, maintaining regulatory compliance, and ensuring the success of medical devices in the market[16][17].

VARIOUS METHODS USED FOR RISK MANAGEMENT OF MEDICAL DEVICE

There are several methods used in risk management of medical devices. Here are some of the most commonly used methods:

1. **Failure Modes and Effects Analysis (FMEA):** This is a structured approach to identify and evaluate potential failures in a medical device system. It involves identifying potential failure modes and determining the severity, likelihood, and detectability of each potential failure mode.

2. **Fault Tree Analysis (FTA):** This is a systematic approach to identify the causes of a particular failure event by constructing a logic diagram of the various possible events that could lead to the failure.
3. **Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP):** This is a systematic approach to identify and evaluate potential hazards and their associated risks in a medical device system. It involves identifying critical control points in the device manufacturing process and implementing controls to minimize or eliminate the identified hazards.
4. **Risk Assessment:** This is a general term that encompasses various methods of identifying and assessing risks in a medical device system. It involves evaluating the likelihood and potential impact of various hazards and determining the appropriate risk management strategies.
5. **Process Mapping:** This is a graphical representation of a process that allows stakeholders to identify areas of potential risk and assess the effectiveness of existing controls.
6. **Probabilistic Risk Assessment (PRA):** This is a method used to assess the probability and potential consequences of various hazardous events in a medical device system. It involves identifying potential scenarios and estimating the probability and potential consequences of each scenario.
7. **Human Factors Analysis:** This is a method used to identify potential errors that may be introduced by human operators in the use or manufacture of medical devices. It involves evaluating the usability of a device and identifying potential sources of error, such as poor design or inadequate training.

Each of these methods has its own strengths and weaknesses, and the appropriate method(s) to use will depend on the specific circumstances and the nature of the medical device being evaluated. A comprehensive risk management plan will typically employ a combination of these methods to provide a more complete and accurate assessment of the risks associated with a medical device system[17][18][19].

Among the methods mentioned, Failure Modes and Effects Analysis (FMEA) is one of the most widely used methods in risk management of medical devices. FMEA is a systematic and proactive approach that helps identify potential failures and their effects on the device's function, patient safety, and user experience. It is a structured method that allows teams to identify, prioritize, and address potential risks by analyzing the potential failure modes and their causes. By using FMEA, device manufacturers can implement design controls that can minimize the risks associated with their devices and improve overall patient safety[2][20][21].

FMEA is not only used in the medical device industry but also in other industries such as aerospace, automotive, and manufacturing. It has proven to be a valuable tool for identifying and mitigating risks in complex systems.

Below is an example of FMEA in a Bone Nail Implant:

1. Define the scope and boundaries of the analysis: The bone nail implant system includes the nail, locking screws, and targeting devices. The scope includes the surgical procedure and postoperative use.
2. Assemble a cross-functional team: The team includes a design engineer, a manufacturing engineer, a quality assurance specialist, a surgeon, and a risk management specialist.
3. Identify potential failure modes: Potential failure modes include nail bending or breakage, screw loosening or breakage, targeting device misalignment, and improper sizing of the implant.
4. Identify potential effects of failure: The potential effects include bone fracture, implant migration or failure, infection, and need for additional surgery.
5. Determine the severity of each effect: The severity rating for bone fracture is high because it can cause long-term disability. The severity rating for implant migration or failure is also high because it may require additional surgery.
6. Determine the likelihood of each failure mode: The likelihood rating for nail bending or breakage is low because the nail is made of a strong material. The likelihood rating for screw loosening or breakage is medium because it can be affected by the quality of the bone. The likelihood rating for targeting device misalignment is low because it is guided by the surgeon. The likelihood rating for improper sizing of the implant is medium because it can be affected by the surgeon's technique.
7. Determine the ability to detect each failure mode: The detection rating for nail bending or breakage is low because it may not be visible on X-ray. The detection rating for screw loosening or breakage is high because it can be detected during follow-up X-rays. The detection rating for targeting device misalignment is high because it can be detected during the surgical procedure. The detection rating for improper sizing of the implant is low because it may not be detected until postoperative X-rays.
8. Calculate the Risk Priority Number (RPN): The RPN for nail bending or breakage is low (18), screw loosening or breakage is medium (60), targeting device misalignment is low (12), and improper sizing of the implant is medium (60).
9. Develop and prioritize recommended actions: Recommended actions include improving the quality of the screws, training the surgeon on proper sizing technique, and developing a monitoring system for screw tightness.
10. Implement the recommended actions: The manufacturer improves the screw quality, the surgeon receives additional training, and the monitoring system is implemented.
11. Monitor and review: The manufacturer monitors the implant's performance and reviews the FMEA periodically to ensure that it remains up to date.

Conclusion

In conclusion, risk management is a critical aspect of the medical device industry, and it involves ensuring the safety and efficacy of medical devices throughout their entire lifecycle. Manufacturers must follow a proactive and systematic approach to risk management, which involves identifying potential hazards and risks, implementing measures to mitigate those risks, and conducting ongoing post-market surveillance to monitor the safety and performance of medical devices.

ISO 14971 and EUMDR 2017/745 provide guidelines and standards for risk management in the medical device industry, which manufacturers must follow to ensure regulatory compliance and patient safety. By following these guidelines and standards, manufacturers can design, develop, test, and evaluate medical devices to ensure their safety and efficacy.

Overall, risk management is a continuous process that requires collaboration and communication among various stakeholders, including manufacturers, regulators, healthcare professionals, and patients. By working together, we can ensure that medical devices remain safe and effective for use in healthcare settings and continue to provide patients with the care they need.

COMPETING INTERESTS DISCLAIMER:

Authors have declared that they have no known competing financial interests OR non-financial interests OR personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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