

## Air Force Print News Today

Air Force news from around the world

### ROBOTx adds helping 'hands' to Kadena pharmacy

by Airman 1st Class Tara A. Williamson  
18th Wing Public Affairs

12/27/2010 - **KADENA AIR BASE, Japan** -- Kadena's pharmacy staff recently added a new member to their crew - a robot designed to count medication for prescriptions.

The PharmASSIST ROBOTx stores the counted medications until electronic prescriptions are received from doctors. Then, by using bar code scanning checks, it ensures patients receive the correct medication.

The new robot is able to produce up to 240 prescriptions per hour, fill prescriptions every 15 seconds and count medications simultaneously.

With an average of 400 prescriptions to be filled in the Kadena pharmacy daily, the estimated time for patients waiting on prescriptions before using the robot was 30 minutes, but now the wait time is has dropped to about 20 minutes.

Tech. Sgt. John Garcia, 18th Medical Support Squadron's NCOIC of pharmacy services, said the robot not only helps decrease patient wait time by nearly 30 percent, it adds extra layers of patient safety and creates a more efficient work environment by minimizing physical effort while maximizing efficiency.

"We can take care of our other responsibilities around the pharmacy that sometimes get pushed back because we don't have enough time," said Sergeant Garcia. "If we speed up the whole filling process, then we'll be able to focus more time on supply and ordering, and rectifying patient issues with medication shortages and name brand to generic switches. The robot will help the pharmacy's efficiency as a whole, which will hopefully translate to even better patient care and customer satisfaction."

Airman 1st Class Roma Terry, 18th Medical Support Squadron pharmacy technician, said the machine makes her day to day job easier.

"I think the robot is really great," Airman Terry added. "It cuts down a lot of work. You don't have to be waiting for a medication - it just fills on its own."

This new robot will also help newer pharmacy Airmen by giving them experience working with ROBOTx here and they will be able to apply that knowledge when they move on to another base, where they'll likely work with similar technology.

Innovation manufactures different size robotics for specific tasks. The next size robotic is typically used for regional or base-sized refills. However, the ROBOTx is ideal for a pharmacy this size with this average work load.

Sergeant Garcia said the PharmASSIST ROBOTx is one of the most modern Innovation products available for outpatient pharmacy and it's exactly what Kadena needs.



Airman 1st Class Roma Terry, a pharmacy technician with the 18th Medical Support Squadron, begins running a check on the new pharmacy robot. The PharmASSIST ROBOTx has established quality checkpoints throughout the pharmacy by employing bar code scanning, digital images of medications and original paper prescriptions, and protocols at every stage of the prescription filling process. (U.S. Air Force photo/ Airman 1st Class Tara A. Williamson)