Harm from medication errors continues to be a serious patient safety problem. The problem is well known in both Western and African Countries. Both Ghana and Denmark have launched programmes with the aim to reduce medication related harm as part of the 3rd global WHO patient safety initiative “Medication without harm”. The overall goal – on a global level as well as on a national level - is to reduce severe, avoidable medication-related harm by 50% in five years using initiatives which address the WHO-defined focus areas.

5. Leadership/management

1. User-involvement
What are the most important areas to work with?

2. Medication-reconciliation and safe processes

3. Deprescribing

4. Technological innovation

For each of the 3 WHO-defined focus areas; ‘polypharmacy, ‘high risk situations’, and ‘transition of care’, the national programmes in Ghana and Denmark include for example strategies, improvement work and implementing projects that build on and consolidate medication safety work in the 5 fields shown in the figure.

Example on the right: Odense Pharmacist Trial Investigating Medication Interventions at Sector Transfer (OPTIMIST): 1500 patients, +5 medications, medication reconciliation with pharmacist follow-up, compared to usual care, and "normal" medication reconciliation.

Denmark: Nanna Kure-Biegel (Nanna.Kure.Biegel@patientsikkerhed.dk); Ulrikke Bryde-Nielsen (ulbn@stp.dk); Inge Kristensen (ik@patientsikkerhed.dk)  
Ghana: Emmanuel Aiyenigba (eaiyenigba@IHI.org)