Lay summary for Product diversity and spectrum of choice in hospital ePrescribing systems in England.

More and more hospitals in England are moving from paper to computer-based systems for prescribing and managing the administration of medicines to improve patient safety. At a basic level, these computer systems – often referred to as ePrescribing systems - are replacing the old paper-based drug charts.

This paper investigated the different ePrescribing systems that are available. We searched published articles and data available online (such as news articles, hospitals' own websites, suppliers' websites and NHS England data sources) to identify the various ePrescribing systems in use or in the process of being set up. We also spoke to experts to ask about additional systems and their status in UK hospitals.

We found there is a wide range of ePrescribing systems available to English hospitals, including 13 hospital-wide applications and a range of specialty systems (e.g., for chemotherapy). These were either standalone systems or integrated into the hospital's other computer systems. More than half of the ePrescribing systems were from international suppliers. We found very few hospitals were using the same systems.

We conclude that the market for ePrescribing systems in England is still in its early days, and ongoing review of system suppliers and their products is required to assist hospitals going digital.