This master’s thesis describes the medication administration process (MAP) in hospital setting from nurses’ perspective. The aim of this thesis is twofold: to describe the current scientific nursing literature of the MAP in hospital settings in a literature review and to describe the empirical research conducted. The aim of the empirical study was to describe the problems and support desired in the MAP from the registered nurses’ (RNs) perspective in hospital setting.

Medication administration process is an integral and central part of nursing which temporally structures nurses’ work. Nurses’ have an essential role in promoting safety and preventing medication errors. Medication errors occur in every stage of medication administration process. Previous observation studies of the factors causing medication errors are in line with the studies surveying nurses’ perceived causes of medication errors. From nurses’ perspective most errors occur due to the distractions and interruptions, equivocal prescriptions and orders, look-alike and sound-alike medications, heavy workload and high volume of patients.

Based on the results of the empirical study conducted, registered nurses’ experience both problems and need support in every stage of the medication administration process. Problems in prescribing are equivocal prescriptions and unclear (printed) medicine charts. Problems RNs experience in documenting are mainly related to the medicine software. Problems experienced in dispensing are related to the unavailability of medicines and medicines themselves. Medicine related problems were incompatibility of prescribed medicines, prescriptions difficult to dispense or prepare the right dose and a high number of patients or generic substances and continuously changing medicine brands. Problems experienced in administering are related to patients, equipment’s, medicines and medicine errors. Course of action environment related problems, such as restlessness and distractions, were experienced problematic in every stage of the MAP excluding prescribing. RNs desire support in prescriptions and medicine charts being updated and real time, in documenting, facilitating the availability of medicines, facilitating verifying medicines and supporting a calm and safe environment. The results of the empirical study are reported in a scientific article and summary in this thesis.

Based on the results of the review and empirical research there are a lot of areas to be developed in MAP. The results of the review and empirical research are in line and parallel. Previous research and RNs experiences should be applied when developing the MAP for a safer and a more flowing process.

Keywords: medication administration, nursing, registered nurse, patient safety