

CASE STUDY: SAFE MEDICINES MANAGEMENT TRAINING

Mid Cheshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust introduced competency-based safe medicines management training for all nursing staff and non-medical prescribers in May 2012. The aim is to improve understanding of medicines management and thereby reduce medication errors.

The training is delivered as a single three hour face-to-face, interactive session to groups of up to twenty staff. The trainers are senior pharmacists and senior pharmacy technicians. It encompasses all aspects of medicines management including prescribing, administration, storage, controlled drug record-keeping and dispensing.

Assessment is via three competency-based workbooks. Participants who do not succeed in reaching the pass mark of 80% (with a 100% pass on critical questions e.g. calculations) are invited to a one-to-one feedback session with a member of the medicines management training team and must complete another workbook. Support is offered by the pharmacy team and practice education facilitators (PEFs) to staff who need additional support to develop their skills in safe medicines practice.

Key Outcomes

The Trust has had a 10% decrease in medicines-associated harm since the training programme was implemented

Feedback from course participants has indicated that they value the training sessions as a source of information about medicines management and an opportunity to ask questions and discuss current practice

Background

Mid Cheshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (MCHFT) is the organisation which manages Leighton Hospital, Crewe; the Victoria Infirmary, Northwich and Elmhurst Intermediate care Centre, Winsford. The Trust was originally established in April 1991 and became a foundation trust in April 2008. It employs approximately 3,200 members of staff and has around 540 hospital beds.

A range of services, including A&E, maternity, outpatients, therapies and children's health are provided for people predominantly from the Crewe, Nantwich, Congleton, Middlewich and Northwich areas, although patients from other areas are also cared for.

The safe medicines management training programme was developed on the recommendation of the Trust's Safe Medicines Practice Committee, a sub-group of the Joint Medicines Management Committee, which comprises staff members from both MCHFT and primary care.

The pharmacy department consists of 80 staff members, including; pharmacists, pharmacy technicians and assistant technical officers. There are five members of pharmacy staff currently involved in delivering the safe medicines management training and the team delivers two 3 hour sessions per month.

Key Aims

- To deliver training on safe medicines management and Trust policies including the Medicines Policy, Controlled Drugs Policy, Anticoagulation Policy and Dispensing for Discharge of Ready-Labelled Medicines Policy
- To make medicines management interesting and topical
- To reduce medicines-related harm in the Trust
- To increase the knowledge and understanding of those who prescribe and administer medications
- To help support a competent workforce



Key Stages of Setup

- A steering group comprising senior pharmacists and senior pharmacy technicians developed the presentations and workbooks.

- The Trust Learning and Development Team, Lead Nurse, Risk Managers, Practice Education Facilitators and Matrons were involved in piloting the training and providing feedback.

- The steering group continue to have regular meetings to ensure the training materials are up-to-date, review feedback from participants and streamline administration.

- Each session is delivered by two pharmacy staff who present the material, mark the workbooks and provide feedback to the participants. Sessions are currently delivered twice a month.

How It Works

- Staff book onto the medicines management training via the Trust's Learning and Development Department
- Participants are expected to have read the relevant Trust policies before attending the session
- Pharmacy medicines management training team deliver a three-hour training session. The session comprises three presentations – prescribing, administration and storage / controlled drugs / dispensing of ready-labelled medicines. Each presentation is followed by participants completing a workbook.
- Workbooks are marked in the session and, where possible, feedback is given to participants prior to them leaving the training room. Participants may opt to receive feedback by e-mail.
- Participants who fail to pass the workbooks are invited to meet with a member of the pharmacy medicines management training team to receive detailed one-to-one feedback and complete another workbook. Support is offered where required.
- The practice education facilitators work closely with pharmacy staff to offer extra training where required to attain competence.

Resources

The project was set up and is delivered using existing Trust resources. Clinical staff time is not back-filled. The pharmacy department has secured 1.5 hours per week of administration time to help deliver the training.

Key Challenges

- Engaging management to believe that medicines management training should be mandatory – discussion with senior Trust staff led to their support for the project
- Time management for the medicines management training team, particularly around one-to-one feedback sessions – we have adapted the training session to provide feedback in the session where appropriate
- Participants freed from job role to complete training. Training is now recognised as mandatory

Key Learning

- The development of a new training programme is time-consuming but worthwhile, in that demonstrable improvements in patient outcomes can be achieved through training sessions to improve awareness of Trust policies and improve practice.
- Feedback from staff has indicated that this training is very welcome and has been positively evaluated, giving staff increased confidence to manage medicines effectively

Sustainability

- Medicines management training is mandatory for all staff who administer medicines and the non-medical prescribers within the Trust.
- A reduction in medicines-related harm has occurred since the implementation of the training, demonstrating how the programme has affected medicines management in the Trust and improved patient outcomes.

Next Steps

- To develop an e-learning package for medicines management within the Trust
- To develop specialised training for paediatric nurses and midwives
- To increase the training to cover all prescribers

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