

Implementing a system for tackling under-reporting of adverse drug reactions within a district general hospital

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Introduction The aim of this project was to implement a stimulating sustainable system for facilitating adverse drug reaction (ADR) reporting and measuring its impact.

Drug safety is an important issue in risk management strategies and therefore within clinical governance. Information from the Committee on Safety of Medicines "yellow card" reporting scheme yields important safety data which contributes to a drug's profile and has in some incidences led to the drug being withdrawn from the market. Despite this, under-reporting remains a significant problem.

Within City Hospitals Sunderland Trust last year there were only 23 yellow card reports. This is far below the expected figure of 5–6 per cent of admissions for a 1,000-bed hospital.¹ It was decided to develop a multi-pronged campaign to stimulate greater rates of reporting. The campaign received the encouragement and support of the drugs and therapeutics committee.

Method Initially there was a baseline review of the reports received in the year prior to the campaign starting. This was to establish an audit cycle for measuring the impact of the campaign. This was followed by an intensive publicity campaign using a variety of tools, which were time-tabled into a six-monthly rolling programme of events.

The main groups that were targeted were the pharmacy staff, the nursing staff on the admissions wards where the initial pilot was held, and the junior medical staff.

For the pharmacy staff, both pharmacists and technicians, an education programme was devised over four sessions. This was composed of a didactic lecture covering epidemiology of the reporting scheme and an

FOCAL POINTS

- The aim of the project was to produce a sustainable, stimulating ongoing programme to improve adverse drug reaction (ADR) reporting rates
- Baseline review revealed a serious shortfall in ADR reports within City Hospitals Sunderland Trust
- A variety of educational tools was employed to ensure retention of information by hospital staff
- Novel methods of promotion were implemented via short-term, high impact awareness weeks together with continuous advertising

emphasis on the importance and significance of reporting. The second session had a more light hearted approach in the form of a quiz, "Who wants to be . . . an ADR reporter?" The third session consisted of an interactive workshop using prescription monitoring, and case studies. The final session gave a general review of the previous weeks with further information on the promotional campaign within the hospital.

The nursing staff were educated by talks at ward meetings.

The junior doctors were focused on one month after induction, via a variety of novel methods, including a permanent PowerPoint presentation on a plasma board and reminder stickers on copies of the British National Formulary. This was to be repeated on a six-monthly cycle coinciding with the changeover in junior medical staff.

The publicity material included posters displayed on wards, in the canteen, in the postgraduate centre, within the pharmacy department and in the multidisciplinary library. Bulletins were distributed to all medical staff and leaflets were given to patients.

During the initial promotion week, pharmacy staff wore distinctive yellow tee-shirts and stickers. To

reach all hospital staff, 18 different advertising features appeared in the hospital bulletin on consecutive weeks.

The medicines information contact details were incorporated into the promotional material. All reports were asked to be returned to medicines information so that the pharmacists could check for completeness and to ensure that only appropriate reports were made to the CSM.

Results The effects of the campaign, including the number of reports, will be reflected back to all the staff as a measurement of success and acknowledgement of contribution via medicines information bulletins.

The results of the campaign have not yet been measured but it is expected that information, knowledge, advice, commitment, enthusiasm and humour must lead to an increase from the current dismal reporting rate.

Reference

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