

IMPROVING QUALITY STANDARDS WITHIN THE RENAL DIRECTORATE

T Manji, R Adkins, A McGrarry
Birmingham Heartlands Hospital

PROBLEM: We provide our renal patients with the knowledge and skills to manage all aspects of their conditions within the home. They become the “expert patients”. Due to the complexity of their health care needs these patients will have long term medical conditions and will need to spend many days in hospital.

The Trust carried out an In Patient Survey to assess quality of care delivered to them. The survey was used to build up a detailed picture across the Trust of the patient experience in hospital. Majority of the feedback was very good stating that a high quality nursing care is being delivered. However there were a few unacceptable issues raised regarding the poor delivery of care! We called these ‘Below the Line Activities’.

PURPOSE: To identify the ‘Below the Line Activities’ and to highlight these to all nursing staff, ensuring that no Below the Line Activities are carried out. To inform staff regarding Whistle Blowing Policy and highlight professional accountability.

DESIGN: Directed by Head of Nursing each Directorate took responsibility for delivery of this information.

Following discussions, the Multidisciplinary Team designed a poster for each of the clinical areas with laminated pictures of the Below the Line Activities. A questionnaire with an accompanied letter explaining the reasons behind the questionnaire and instructions regarding completion and return was given to each member of nursing staff. The posters were left in all of the clinical areas to help with completion of the questionnaire and a 2-week return date given. Collections of questionnaires were carried out locally by a designated person. Any staff that failed to complete the questionnaires was given an extended time of 10 days. Following this, further failure to return was interrupted as lack of awareness and automatically triggered a one-to-one teaching / training session with the renal Matron

FINDINGS: 104 Questionnaires were sent out and 95 returned first time (91% first time response)

The returns have shown that the majority of staff quickly acquired knowledge and within 2 weeks were aware the problems of all Below the Line Activities, where they came from, who is responsible for reporting these activities, who to report to, and who is accountable for delivering poor practice. They have been made aware of the Whistle Blowing Policy and were able to reflect on previous experience regarding these activities and describe how they would deal with a Below the Line Activity if they were to witness again.

CONCLUSION: we found that by encouraging a self learning approach such as the one described above, ensured that almost all of the staff were able to participate in disseminating these very important issues relating to quality patient care. It provoked a lot of discussion within the Renal Directorate and allowed minimal disturbance to staffing levels.

RELEVANCE: Very time efficient and simple methods can change attitude and behavior that has the potential to improve the quality of care delivered to renal patients.