UTILIZATION OF AUDIT CHAMPIONS AND THE EFFECTS ON NURSES’ COMPLETION RATE OF SUBSTANCE ADDICTION ASSESSMENT TOOLS

by

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ABSTRACT

Substance use disorders have a negative impact on health outcomes and healthcare expenditures. The abuse of alcohol and/or other drugs not only creates clinical and functional impairments for the individuals, but it also impacts the families and communities. Detoxification from substances is an initial step in the process for those seeking treatment for substance addiction. The purpose of this evidenced-based project was to implement audit champions to monitor and promote consistency in the completion of assessment tools by health care providers caring for adult patients (18 years and older) on an inpatient detoxification unit and examine the effects of the intervention on the completion rate. Although the literature review indicates strong support for the use of champions in the clinical setting for practice improvement, there is limited evidence of the use of champions in substance addiction treatment.

The Clinical Institute Withdrawal Assessment - Alcohol Revised (CIWA-Ar) and Clinical Opiate Withdrawal Scale (COWS) are important tools to assist health care providers in assessing the withdrawal symptoms of patients and implementing appropriate treatment. Proper assessments help with effective management of withdrawal symptoms, decreasing the risk of complications, and improving patient outcomes. Even though the established protocols for the inpatient detoxification unit state to complete the assessment tools on newly admitted patients every 4 hours, the current practice is completion of the tools every 6 to 8 hours.

A quality improvement project design was implemented with data collected and analyzed to compare the pre-intervention and post-intervention completion rates of the assessment tools. The results show a significant increase in the nurses’ adherence to the established protocols with the use of audit champions. As clinical practice on the inpatient detoxification unit improves...
with greater consistency in patient assessments, patient outcomes can improve with better management of withdrawal symptoms. Improved quality of care benefits all stakeholders