An eLearning modular approach to pressure ulcer prevention and management: the views of nursing staff

INTRODUCTION
Pressure ulcers are a significant burden both financially and in terms of health-related quality of life. In response to a growing regard for pressure ulcers as preventable causes of harm, the Scottish government has been involved in the ongoing development of comprehensive quality-improvement programmes encompassing standardised pressure ulcer-prevention packages and the adoption by some health boards of a “Zero Tolerance” mantra regarding avoidable pressure damage (NHS HIS 2011).

There is recognition that a key intervention in the successful achievement of this aim is staff education; however, traditional methods of delivery in pre and post registration nursing are not always adequate. Although there is a shortage of literature exploring the application of eLearning in the healthcare setting, proposed benefits include: convenience, flexibility, compatibility with different learning styles, and cost effectiveness, particularly in the delivery of education programmes on a mass level.

HYPOTHESIS/AIM
This paper considers the views of nursing staff on the proposed effectiveness of an eLearning education package for pressure ulcer prevention and management interventions in NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde (NHSGGC).

METHODS
In NHSGGC, a modular eLearning education package for pressure ulcer prevention and management was developed by members of the Tissue Viability Team to support staff involved in patient-care delivery and to ensure education on a level that supports the achievement of targeted quality-improvement outcomes. The programme was based upon existing NHSGGC education frameworks and incorporated into LearnPro NHS, a web-based system that records module completion and assessment, and meets the requirements for both mandatory and role-specific training. A small group of nursing staff was randomly selected from across various clinical areas and skill levels, to test the pilot modules prior to implementation. A qualitative questionnaire was used to obtain a formal evaluation of experience upon module completion. The final module content was adapted and implemented according to relevant feedback from the pilot evaluation.

RESULTS
The uptake for pilot module completion across NHSGGC was 100% of the pilot group, and informal feedback from clinical staff was largely positive. The majority of staff expressed a favourable attitude towards eLearning as a concept, although a small number reported feeling uncertain about their skills in utilising it fully. The reported barriers to utilising eLearning mainly included barriers associated with resources including: time, computer availability, and lack of IT support. The majority of participants believed the pressure ulcer content of the modules to be relevant and sufficient; however, a small number reported finding the subject matter too basic in relation to their clinical role and level of individual knowledge.
CONCLUSION
The Tissue Viability Team found eLearning to be a useful supplement to traditional delivery methods of pressure ulcer prevention and management; however, a marked challenge was the delivery of theoretical content that was suitable for clinical staff with varied knowledge and skill sets across a large organisation. Future recommendations for practice include auditing the incidence of pressure damage in NHSGGC to critically analyse the direct impact of eLearning education upon patient outcomes.

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REFERENCES

UPCOMING EWMA INITIATIVES

Antimicrobial Stewardship in Wound Care Programme
The overall aim of the stewardship programme is to reduce inappropriate and overuse of antimicrobials in wound care by promoting, facilitating, and teaching good antimicrobial use practices. The programme builds on three key objectives and program deliverables:
- Development of treatment recommendations
- A practical guide for implementation of antimicrobial stewardship
- Execution of educational events

Document: Health-Related Quality of Life – the Patient’s Perspective
The EWMA Council has recently decided to initiate a project to highlight the importance of evaluating the patient’s HRQoL in relation to wound management. The primary objective of this project is to develop recommendations for use of the available HRQoL assessment tools for wound care patients.

Document: Oxygen Therapies Guidance
The EWMA Oxygen Therapies Guidance Document will provide practice-oriented guidance on the current use of various forms of oxygen therapies for wound treatment. This will include an overview of the available treatment options, and an assessment of the best available evidence for use.
Finally, the document will explore the main reasons behind the large differences in the use of oxygen therapies for wound healing between the U.S.A. and Europe, and the potential for increasing the use of oxygen therapies in Europe.

Read more about upcoming EWMA initiatives at www.ewma.org.