The Power of Innovation

A health care system to meet our needs

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Enhancing Clinical Capacity of Hunter New England Pharmacy Services

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Introduction

The Garling Report stated that clinical pharmacists should be involved in patient care at the earliest appropriate opportunity – yet Clinical Pharmacists only worked on selected wards in 12 HNE hospitals.

Pharmacy took up the challenge of optimising existing resources to expand clinical activities that support medication management and patient safety.

Aim

To maximise patients' access to clinical Pharmacy services by working collaboratively to modify work practices and provide support for staff performing a wider range of duties focussing on patient care.

Method

With governance provided by the HNE Directors of Pharmacy Group, stakeholders' input was addressed by Pharmacist focus groups. Strategies were developed with the widest range of applicability to all HNE facilities.

Strategy: Collation and development of educational resources

Existing resources across all facilities were collated, evaluated, enhanced and extended.

Strategy: Modifications to workflow

An evaluation of activities and staff roles aligned with knowledge gaps and resource shortfall directed the modification of staff responsibilities to incorporate the expansion of clinical services.

Strategy: Access formal training and incentives

Formal courses specific to hospital Pharmacy practice were accessed through Charles Sturt University for Pharmacy Technicians and Assistants.

Incentive funding through the Government's Productivity Placement Program was investigated to support the enrolment of 39 HNE Pharmacy Technicians and Assistants.

Pharmacy services increased by 6 additional Pharmacists covering specialist clinical areas including Neurology, ICU, Emergency, Mental Health and Antibiotic Stewardship.

Hospitals at Kurri Kurri, Cessnock and Singleton now have clinical Pharmacy services where previously only drug supply \ activities were conducted. Additionally, 2 Pharmacists are delivering a remote rural clinical service from Tamworth and Maitland Hospitals to an additional twenty one facilities.

Audits of our initiated clinical services (Fig 1) show consistency with literature reports which ensures service quality.[1,2] An audit in theMaitland Hospital Emergency Department showed 313 patient safety recommendations made from 41 patient Admission Medication Histories conducted by the Clinical Pharmacist. These are aligned to the National Safety and Quality Health Service Standard 4 – Medication Safety.

Resources to support and enhance Pharmacists' clinical patient care have been expanded to ensure flexibility of current staff rotating to new ward areas and to rapidly integrate newly employed Pharmacists into hospital practice. Resources include directed learning workbooks, online interactive education modules and monthly videoconferenced workshops aimed at increasing clinical skills.

Modifications to workflow involving changes in staff responsibilities were achieved by engaging staff in the process. Collaboration between Pharmacy Departments has led to the collection, critical evaluation and optimised usage of available resources to ensure staff competency in the new roles.

Access to educational resources has been improved by development of a Pharmacy specific education website located on the HNE intranet and with interactive modules on the MyLink Learning Portal. These ensure equitable access to all resources for every HNE Pharmacy staff member via any networked computer within HNE.

Clinical supervision using an internationally validated system of clinical supervision has been initiated to support and promote practitioner development in optimising pharmacists' clinical efficacy for our patients. Quality is assured with four HNE Pharmacists achieving national accreditation to provide this supervision. Inclusion in statewide professional groups further increases the range of available resources and allow benchmarking to ensure consistently with best practice models.

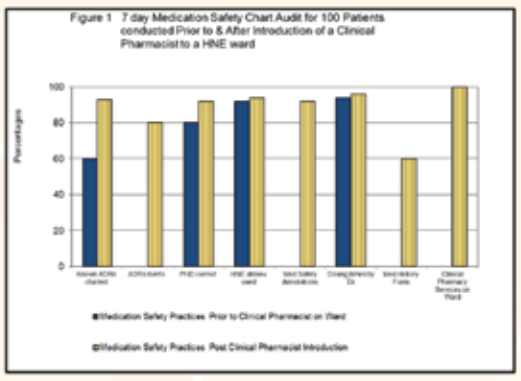
Your patients will benefit from the Pharmacists conducting medication reconciliation, medication management assessments with drug therapy review and monitoring provision of medicines information, adverse drug reaction management, ward round participation, information and advice on pharmacokinetic and pharmacodynamic aspects of medicines use and provision of medication counselling to patients.[3]

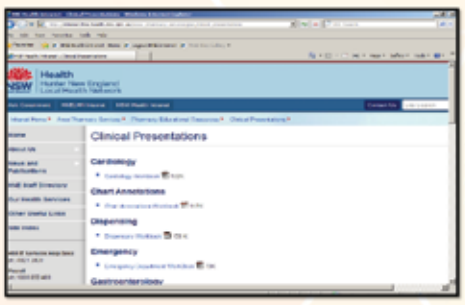
Comments received about initiated Pharmacy Clinical Services

"The clinical pharmacist is a godsend to the ward."

"Having the Pharmacist on the ward has saved an enormous amount of nursing time, prevented a number of serious drug errors and I am sure saved the ward considerable amount of money."

"The Pharmacist's role in patient education makes their transit to home much safer and less stressful."





Pharmacy Education Page on the HNE intranet

Pharmacy's MyLink Learning Portal Education Modules

Conclusion

This project has resulted in a significant increase in the capacity of HNE Pharmacy services to deliver quality patient related clinical services. The technological infrastructure now exists to sustain these improvements and exploit future opportunities for continued expansion.

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