Developing and Implementing a Community Care Pathway for the Management of Chronic Oedema

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Background
Chronic oedema has a profound impact on quality of life. It may originate from primary anatomical reasons (primary lymphoedema), be secondary to cardio-vascular dysfunction, be related to cancer or cancer treatments and is increasingly a result of obesity. The numbers of patients with chronic oedema are increasing and both specialist lymphedema and community nursing teams are over-stretched.

Many community nurses lack evidence-based knowledge and skills in the management of chronic oedema and specialist services therefore often provide care for both complex and straightforward management.

Aims
To develop and pilot an integrated community pathway for the management of chronic oedema.

Method
A clinical care pathway was devised through Nominal Group technique.

A Knowledge Transfer Partnership project was developed by 3M (Industry) with University of Nottingham. Stakeholders in Leicester were engaged.

Data from a point prevalence study, across Leicester City was used to operationally define a feasibility assessment of the pathway.

Implementation was supported by a competency framework and bespoke training programme.

The pathway was piloted with 30 patients receiving care from three community nursing teams.

What’s a Knowledge Transfer Partnership
• Collaboration between a university and partner/s for a specific project
• Co-funded by the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills through Innovate UK

Data Collection
Quantitative and qualitative data has been collected via one-to-one interviews with the community nurses following appointments with pathway inducted patients. Data includes:
- the patient’s symptoms related to the oedema
- record of resource use,
- questions pertaining to levels of patient and nurse knowledge

Results
The pilot has been underway for three months and initial results reveal:
- an improvement in symptoms, including lymphorrhea
- a reduction in nurse visits and product use
- greater patient concordance due to better understanding of goals and treatments
- some long term patients discharged

Future Vision...
ReVolving Caseloads
UnStable Oedema
InCorrect Referrals
UnRealistic Expectations

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