Transforming Hand Hygiene Culture: Education and Program Overhaul in Veterans Hospital Staff

Megan Johnston MPH Candidate, Health Behavior and Health Education
University of Michigan School of Public Health

Setting

This internship took place at the Ann Arbor Veterans Affairs Hospital (AAVA) in the Infection Prevention and Control Department (IPC). The IPC Department at the AAVA is dedicated to ensuring a safe and healing environment by collaborating with healthcare teams, adhering to the highest standards of practice, and responding effectively to emerging infection challenges. I had the privilege of working with Hospital Epidemiologist and Infectious Disease Physician Kathleen Linder, as well as Jacob John, MDRO prevention coordinator.

Objectives

- Explore the development and delivery of educational programs for staff and patients.
- Implement a hand hygiene program targeted towards staff education.
- Assist in quality improvement initiatives aimed at reducing infection rates.

Activities

Hand Hygiene Audits

- These audits were completed in order to get a baseline for overall hand hygiene compliance (using Joint Commission standards) across all hospital units.
- These audits also helped build rapport with staff while rounding on hospital units.

Created Educational Program Outline

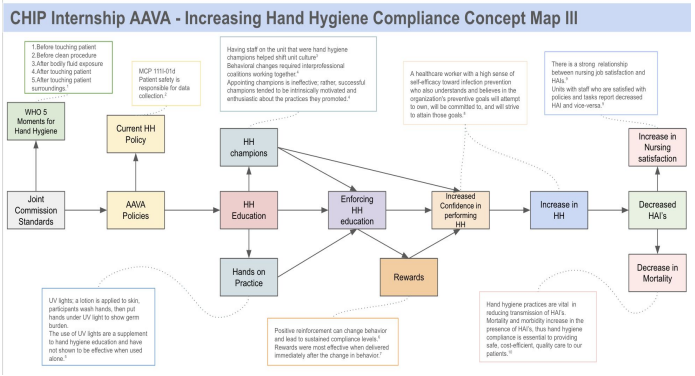
- Based on the theories learned in HBHED 600: Psychosocial Factors in Health-Related Behavior.
  - For example, perceived susceptibility in the Health Belief Model, staff are more likely to perform hand hygiene if they perceive they are at risk for illness.

Created Patient Education Infographics

- Created a patient infographic for the correct use of Mupirocin Ointment, which is used before surgery to prevent infection.

Completed COVID-19 Surveillance and Reported Cases to the Michigan Disease Surveillance System





Lessons Learned

- There is a great need for effective educational programs within hospitals, especially when it comes to preventing infections.
- Change starts with leaders and will not be sustained unless the targeted behavior is made a priority.

APEx Products

Patient Education Infographic

- This infographic was distributed to patients who were to use Mupirocin Ointment for 5 days before their surgery.
- This ointment decreases the risk of developing an infection after surgery, but patients were not educated on how to use it, which lead to an increase in post surgery infections at the AAVA.

Concept Map for the Hand Hygiene Program

- The concept map contained each component of the program and supplemental information such as health behavior theories and published articles.

Acknowledgments

Contact Information: Megan Johnston, johnstme@umich.edu
Special thank you to the epidemiology department and CHIP Certificate Director Betsy Foxman for providing me with this opportunity. Thank you to Hospital Epidemiologist and Infectious Disease Physician Dr. Linder, AAVA MDRO Prevention Coordinator Jacob John, and AAVA Infection Control Director John Morris for supporting me throughout this experience.