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Case for change

Every 30 seconds, a lower limb is lost to Diabetes somewhere in the world[1];

Every seven seconds, a person dies from diabetes[2]

In Australia, diabetes related amputation rates (per 100,000) have increased by 30% between 1998 and 2011 resulting in increased health expenditure. 15% of people with diabetes will develop a foot ulcer while 85% of amputations are preceded by ulceration.

Western Sydney is a diabetes "hot spot". 50% of people in our LHD are at risk of developing diabetes and 15% of people have diabetes. WSLHD and WentWest is proactive in combatting this burden of disease and formed a Western Sydney Diabetes Initiative. As part of this initiative a need for integrated and enhanced diabetes foot services in Western Sydney has been identified.

Goal

"To improve the progression of patients with diabetes through the public and private health care sectors"

The goal of this project also aligns with and will support the goals of both the Western Sydney Diabetes (WSD) Initiative (WSDPMI) and Western Sydney Integrated Care (WSIC).

Objectives

- Increase screening rates** of patients with diabetes from **21% to 50%** and reduce the variation of screening practices in pilot General Practices in Western Sydney by December 2015.
- Increase patients awareness** of diabetic foot complications from **76% to 95%**, to empower the patient to seek active treatment in a timely manner by June 2016.
- Increase timeliness and appropriateness** of complexity of referral of patients into Hospital Podiatry Services in accordance with **foot screening (risk stratification)**.

Method

The ACI Centre for Healthcare Redesign Methodology was used throughout the project. Activities undertaken to identify current status and issues included:

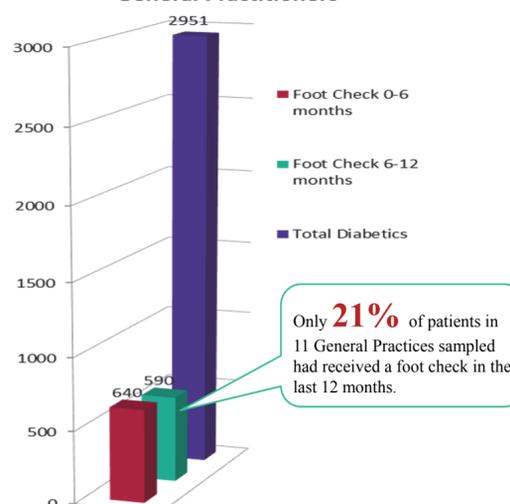
- 21 Patient Interviews** – Foot Wound Clinic Westmead hospital, Blacktown hospital and WentWest Diabetes Patient Support Group
- 47 File Audits** – Foot Wound Clinic Westmead and Blacktown Hospitals, Blacktown Community Health Centre
- 6 Staff Interviews** – Podiatrists, Diabetes Educators, Staff Specialists
- 11 Providers Interviews** – General Practitioners, Private Podiatrists, Nurses
- 11 Pen Clinical Audit Tool (PenCAT)** – Extraction of demographic and clinical data from General Practices Clinical Management Systems (CMS). Specifically diabetes clinical data and record data of foot checks for patients with diabetes.
- Process Mapping** - to identify the current patient journey

Diagnostics

Key findings:

- 79% of Patients with diabetes are not screened for diabetes foot complications.
- Currently there is no standardised screening practice across WSLHD leading to highly inconsistent screening practices
- Inappropriate and incomplete referrals to hospital services
- Lack of communication between service providers
- Insufficient education on the risk status of diabetes foot complications

Number of Foot Checks completed in previous 12 months recorded by General Practitioners



Planning and implementing solutions

A number of key solutions were identified through various brainstorming workshops, interviews and meetings with stakeholders and patients. Solutions prioritisation led to the planning and implementation of top 3 solutions:

- Electronic referral form to improve the timely and appropriate referrals from GPs, private and community podiatry services to hospital foot services
- GP Practice Nurses/GP Liaison Nurses/Chronic Care Nurses/Aboriginal Health Workers to provide screening: to increase the screening rates at pilot sites and education in the community
- Minimum Standard Screening Tool: to establish a minimum screening standards and reduce variation in the screening

Accelerated Implementation Methodology was used for planning and implementation process.

Results

60% of patients screened during the pilot had **NEVER** had their feet examined prior

All Nurses surveyed post implementation stated that in principle, they found the tool to be beneficial and vital for identification of the risk of foot complications in patients with Diabetes.

Pre Implementation – 10% Practice Nurses surveyed feel confident to recommend to a GP that they consider a referral to a Podiatrist for the patient.

Post Implementation – 100% Practice Nurses surveyed feel confident to recommend to a GP that they consider referral to a Podiatrist for the patient.

Patient Perspective - What Works Well?

"Nurse or Podiatrist examines and provides education"

66% had previously **NEVER** been told about the risk of foot complications by their GP

Sustaining change

60 Second Foot Screening Tool & Electronic Referral Template for Hospital Foot Clinics

Supplementary patient education flyer

- Distribution, education and promotion by multiple professionals from WSLHD and WSPHN to Nurses in the Primary and Tertiary Health Care settings across Western Sydney, as a normal way of working.
- Distribution, education and promotion by the WSLHD Diabetes Case Conferencing Team to involved GP's and Practice Nurses.
- WSPHN Chronic Disease Management Support Nurses trained in use of tool and will continue to support Primary Health Care Nurses to implement in their practices.
- Available on the Western Sydney HealthPathways website as a key evidence based resource.
- Promotion and use of tools by private and community Podiatrists.

Over time, audits of incoming referrals to Foot Wound Clinic Blacktown Hospital and Foot Wound Clinic Westmead Hospital will determine the impact of the 60 Second Foot Screening Tool and new referral template on patient flow and timeliness and appropriateness of referrals.

Commitment to ongoing monitoring and improvement of current solutions and other identified solutions.

Conclusion

The process of creating and managing resources as solutions has been relatively simple. Utilising stakeholders with key skills such as IT for electronic documents and website uploads, is vital. Gaining buy-in through the influence of sponsors

Build on existing resources and models.

Align project goals with organisational strategic objectives. This is beneficial as work being conducted for the project is on the 'agenda' of key stakeholders. Buy in and implementation can be fast tracked with barriers to implementation reduced.

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