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Improving Asthma Management in Hospital Emergency Departments with Interactive Webinars

Alexandra C.H. Nowakowski, PhD, MPH, Henry J. Carretta, PhD, MPH, Tavia R. Smith, BS, Kinjal J. Patel, BS, Julie K. Dudley, BA, Jamie R. Forrest, MS

ABSTRACT

Our objective was to create dialogue and share troubleshooting strategies for challenges identified by a 2012 survey of emergency department asthma management practices in Florida. Two complementary intervention sessions, each with its own post-test, were implemented. We created a virtual gathering of professionals from clinical asthma care and health services research settings throughout Florida. Participants included clinical care providers and health administrators from participating hospitals, health services researchers, and other emergency asthma care stakeholders from Florida. We examined enrollment of target professional groups, perceived utility of intervention format and content, and participant satisfaction with webinars. The webinars appealed strongly to target professional groups. A large majority of participants in both sessions perceived the content to be very useful, and expressed high satisfaction with their experiences. Interactive webinars offer effective resources for hospital emergency departments seeking to improve asthma care. These activities should continue in Florida and expand elsewhere as resources and interest permit.

Florida Public Health Review, 2015; 12, 31-33.

BACKGROUND

In 2013, the Florida Department of Health's Asthma program and the Florida Asthma Coalition partnered with the Florida Hospital Association's Hospital Engagement Network to offer two complementary webinars on asthma management in emergency departments. These webinars brought together researchers, hospital personnel, asthma care experts, and other interested professionals. Webinars focused on current problems and challenges with emergency department asthma management in Florida, offering data on the current landscape as well as promising solution strategies. The first webinar, "Optimal Asthma Treatment in the Emergency Department," took place on May 14, 2013. This workshop covered best practices for providing asthma care in the ED setting. Content included data on rising rates of hospitalization and ED utilization for asthma, national guidelines for effective asthma care, and pharmacology of asthma management.

The second webinar, "Transitioning Asthma Care from the Emergency Department to Prevent Repeat Visits," took place on July 18, 2013. This workshop covered strategies for reducing utilization of EDs for routine asthma care. Content included data on rising rates of hospitalization and ED utilization for asthma,

national guidelines for effective asthma care, findings from a recent survey of hospital asthma management practices in Florida, and ongoing efforts to improve primary care and self-management resources for patients.

Webinars were developed collaboratively by Florida Department of Health program staff and Florida Hospital Association staff. Content was developed in consultation with expert speakers. Findings from a collaborative survey of hospital asthma management practices conducted by the Florida Asthma Coalition and Florida Hospital Association in summer 2012 provided key topics and resources for developing both webinars.

METHODS

Both webinars were evaluated via SurveyMonkey questionnaires. These surveys collected a variety of qualitative and quantitative information. The online evaluation questionnaires assessed participant satisfaction with webinar content, as well as desired changes to the program for future years. Evaluation surveys also collected information necessary for awarding continuing education credits to eligible individuals (e.g., nurses, respiratory therapists).

Florida Public Health Review, 12, 31-33.

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Participants were first asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with seven statements about the webinar. The next set of questions asked them to rate the usefulness of the information presented and the chance of this information improving effectiveness and results. They were also asked to rate the chance that they will use the information to collaborate with professionals within and outside of their organization to improve asthma management. An additional quantitative question asked if participants would recommend this webinar to a colleague. Finally, participants in the second webinar were asked which version of the webinar they accessed (live presentation or recording). Free response questions solicited suggestions for future Asthma Management Webinars, as well as insights on how the Florida Asthma Coalition can improve asthma management in its constituent communities.

Participation in both webinars was high: 98 people for Webinar 1 and 85 people for Webinar 2, yielding a total sample of 183 people. These participation totals only count people who attended the live webcast of each workshop; additional individuals have since accessed recordings of both webinars. Respondents for both webinars came mostly from northern and central Florida. Respiratory therapists (45%) and nurses (25%) accounted for the majority of participants.

RESULTS

Evaluation of Webinar 1 – “Optimal Asthma Treatment in the Emergency Department”

A total of 98 people participated in the live webinar session. Of these 98 participants, 71 individuals (72%) completed the evaluation survey. Over 90% of those who completed the questionnaire agreed that the content met their overall expectations. Most respondents (92%) reported that the webinar was well organized, and 95% agreed that the webinar was presented in an easy-to-follow format.

About 70% of respondents strongly agreed the webinar devoted an adequate time to each topic, and 20% slightly agreed. Over 97% of respondents agreed that the webinar helped them understand the trends in emergency department visits due to asthma. Nearly 63% strongly agreed that the webinar helped them better understand the NHLBI’s Asthma Management Guidelines, and 31% slightly agreed. About 93% agreed that the webinar helped them to understand the pharmacologic aspects of asthma management better.

About 65% of respondents reported that there was an excellent amount of useful information and ideas provided; another 27% deemed the information good and 7% saw it as fair. Approximately 60% of

respondents reported that the usefulness of the information and ideas provided to their hospital or workplace was excellent. Around 52% of survey takers said that there was an excellent chance that the information and ideas provided would improve their effectiveness and results; 38% reported a good chance. About 60% of respondents reported there was an excellent chance that they would use the information provided to collaborate with professionals within and outside of their organization to improve asthma management; 30% said these chances were good and another 10% said they were fair.

Approximately 92% of the individuals surveyed would recommend this webinar to a colleague. About 82% would very likely participate in the next Asthma Management Webinar; nearly 10% would be somewhat likely to participate, and 6% would be somewhat unlikely to participate. Most of the comments contained positive feedback about how the webinar was helpful and excellent.

Participants were asked to provide any suggestions they would have for future Asthma Management Webinars. About 23% of survey respondents answered this question. Many wanted more time for discussion. Several contributors also requested more discussion on pharmacology, and less on financial impacts of asthma.

Finally, participants were asked to provide any additional suggestions or thoughts about how the Florida Asthma Coalition can help provide effective asthma management services in their community. Of the 13% of survey takers who responded, most gave positive feedback and indicated specific locations in their communities where they felt that asthma management would be useful.

Evaluation of Webinar 2 – “Transitioning Asthma Care from the Emergency Department to Prevent Repeat Visits”

A total of 85 people participated in the live webinar session. Of the 85 participants, 65 (76%) completed the evaluation survey. Over 92% of individuals who completed the questionnaire strongly or slightly agreed that the webinar met their overall expectations. About 97% reported that the webinar was organized and presented in an easy-to-read format along with devoting an adequate time to each topic.

Nearly 60% of respondents felt that the webinar provided an excellent amount of useful information and ideas; about 40% felt the quantity of information was good and 5% felt it was fair. Fully 100% of participants had positive feedback in regards to the usefulness of the information provided in the webinar. More than 98% also responded positively when asked

how useful the information would be to their hospital or workplace.

About 60% of individuals said there was an excellent chance that the information and ideas provided would improve the effectiveness of their workplace activities. The same percentage said that they would use the information to collaborate with professionals within and outside of their organization to improve asthma management. Approximately 90% of respondents would recommend this webinar to a colleague. About 60% had previously participated in the live presentation or watched the recording of Part 1 of the webinar series.

Some suggestions for future webinars addressed reaching professionals in a more broad range of clinical settings. A live chat segment was proposed as well. One individual expressed an interest in providing information about an adult program instead of just pediatrics. Suggestions for asthma management services in the community called for more hands-on instructions on what to do, including illustrations. Another respondent suggested including educational items related to transitions between care settings, as well as continuity of care.

DISCUSSION

Pilot webinars in 2013 were well attended, suggesting that substantial interest in such educational content exists among Florida hospital personnel and health services researchers. The webinars were well received by attendees, with large majorities reporting that they would attend future webinars and recommend these activities to their colleagues. As resources and time permit, the Florida Asthma Coalition and Florida Hospital Association should consider offering additional hospital asthma management webinars in future years. Moreover, these organizations should dialogue with similar groups in other states to stimulate collaborative emergency asthma care improvement opportunities nationwide using webinar technology. Potential future webinars should incorporate suggestions on additional educational items such as continuity of care and transitions between care settings. Additional webinars should also allow more time for participants to engage in dialogue with presenters and each other.

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