Gaining Momentum to Improve Stroke Rehabilitation Intensity: One PDSA at a Time

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BACKGROUND

In Ontario, Quality Based Procedures (QBP) recommend that patients with stroke receive at least 3 hours of therapy/day for at least six days a week. Inpatient rehabilitation units are now required to measure rehabilitation intensity (RI) time. The Ontario Stroke Network (OSN) recently embarked on RI focused knowledge translation activities. The timing was opportune to engage teams across Southeastern Ontario (SEO) in quality improvement work towards this best practice recommendation.

WHAT IS REHABILITATION INTENSITY?

Rehabilitation Intensity is defined as the amount of time that a patient is engaged in active, goal-directed, face to face rehabilitation therapy, monitored or guided by a therapist, over a seven day/week period.

* Definition established as part of the OSN Rehabilitation Intensity Project through literature review, stakeholder consultation, and expert consensus.

TOOLS AND METHODS

To support teams in identifying possible areas of change generative brainstorming and nominal voting were used to create a summary of areas of focus. Training and use of PDSA worksheet helped define next steps with emphasis on measuring change.

RESULTS

To date local sites have established local workgroups and identified challenges to achieving RI goals. Common challenges included scheduling, patient readiness, staffing ratios, and communication. All teams have selected a QI initiative, created a RI data monitoring plan, and have made varying levels of progress toward their QI goal with the ultimate target of 180 min/day of stroke rehab intensity.

CONCLUSIONS

QI is effective when applied to a problem a team is motivated to solve. Concurrently teaching QI methods to multiple teams with similar needs can be an effective engagement strategy. Enabling frontline staff to identify challenges, brainstorm solutions and lead change was effective in gaining momentum. Access and use of real time data to measure QI was a challenge for all teams. A critical success factor is the partnership between providers, managers and decision support. Teams are in an improved state of readiness to support new tests of change to increase rehab intensity.