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Evaluating patient safety in mental health wards

Project in progress

Context It is estimated that over 850,000 incidents cause harm to NHS patients in the UK every year, with an average of 40 fatal incidents per year in each NHS institution. This project, initiated by the Health Foundation, aims to comprehensively evaluate and ensure patient safety in mental health wards in East Anglia. Individuals with mental illness are at increased risk of patient safety concerns, as are the staff working on site. Examples include violence and aggression, falls, self-harm, suicide, seclusion and reduced capacity for self-advocacy. This work aims to find a successful method to identify trust-specific patient safety culture, as well as to evaluate and improve patient safety.

Approach This project is piloted across five NHS Foundation trusts, located in Colchester, Norwich, Cambridge, Basildon and Hatfield. The participants received trainings on system safety assessment and human factors to identify patient safety hazards and to improve teamwork skills. Through these trainings, each trust was enabled to agree upon the main patient safety issues, and to select the best suited method to address this problem.

SELECTED INTERVENTIONS for safer care pathways in mental health services

1. **Phone calls and moving on plans empower the patient during discharge**
2. **Making one person in charge of the full admission, carer groups and de-escalation trainings, will limit violence and agression**
3. **A night & day clock, motion sensor, and hanodover sheets minimise the chance of falls**
4. **To avoid self-harm, more trainings are povided and care is personalised**

Results Patient safety is a central issue to care design and delivery on mental health wards. The collaborative approach used in this study results in sustainable solutions to improve patient safety culture.

Sanne Verra

Further details on this project available in the following:

The Health Foundation. Safer care pathways in mental health services: Closing the Gap in Patient Safety. Retrieved from: http://www.health.org.uk/programmes /projects/safer-care-pathways-mental-health-services-closing-gap-patient-safety