‘Safe Use of Insulin’ e-learning module: a survey among foundation year one doctors

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INTRODUCTION

The National Patient Safety Agency (NPSA) review on insulin errors from November 2003 to November 2009 in England reported 16,600 errors via its national report and learning service.⁽¹⁾ Our own hospital data from the National Inpatient Diabetes Audit, 2010, showed 50% insulin errors compared to the national average of 60%, and medication errors of 30% when compared to the national average of almost 40%.⁽²⁾ An e-learning module on safe use of insulin is freely available on the NHS diabetes website for all healthcare professionals for guidance and support for the safe use of insulin. A competency-based assessment undertaken among 40 foundation year one (FYI) trainees in City Hospital, Sunderland, had demonstrated improvement in insulin prescribing errors after completion of this e-learning module.⁽³⁾

AIM

To create and raise awareness of the safe use of the insulin e-learning module on the NHS diabetes website (www.diabetes.nhs.uk/safe_use_of_insulin) by implementing three surveys in four months, aiming for 100% completion rate by the end.

METHOD

The survey was carried out at three time points, from January 2011 to April 2011. Over this period of time, there were also six sessions of teaching addressing various aspects of diabetes and endocrinology. All attending FYI doctors completed the anonymised survey forms during their weekly compulsory teaching sessions.

RESULTS

Overall, 72% of the FYI trainees responded to the survey. Figure 1 describes the progressive improvement of confidence in insulin prescribing, awareness about the e-learning course and completion of the course over the time period. Common reasons cited for non-completion of the course were: ‘lack of time’; ‘forgotten’; and ‘procrastination’.

Figure 1 Change in awareness and completion of the e-learning course among FYI trainees

CONCLUSIONS

There was a significant and progressive improvement in the confidence level of insulin prescription and all FYI trainees were aware of the e-learning module by the third survey. However, the completion rate was dismal. Though the majority of the FYI trainees had completed the course, the reasons cited for non-completion of the course, which this year had been voluntary, is concerning. The results suggests a group of young doctors who are aware of their lack of confidence in prescribing insulin as well as the availability of a course which will specifically improve their knowledge and thereby their ability to do so, has been failing to complete this. The reasons cited may suggest one of the following:

- they do not have this time during their working day to complete the course
- ‘willful ignorance’
- unsuitable for ‘adult learning’, principles of which supports web-based education programmes as this e-learning course

In some hospitals, this course has been made compulsory for all the new FYI trainees, but we need to address the reason of their non-completion so that it does not have far reaching consequences.

REFERENCES

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