A Monitoring Tool for Detecting Harm: Global Triggers

The Problem

Traditional methods of identifying adverse events (such as incident reporting) may not be comprehensive enough to capture all adverse events. The IHI (Institute for Healthcare Improvement) Global Trigger Tool provides a way to measure and monitor the overall level of harm within a hospital from the perspective of the patient. BIDMC began using this process in March 2008.

Aim/Goal

The Global Trigger Tool provides a mechanism to identify sources of harm so that performance improvement interventions may be developed to prevent these events in the future.

The Team

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➢ Alex Carbo MD - Hospitalist
➢ Mary Fay RN – Patient Safety Coordinator
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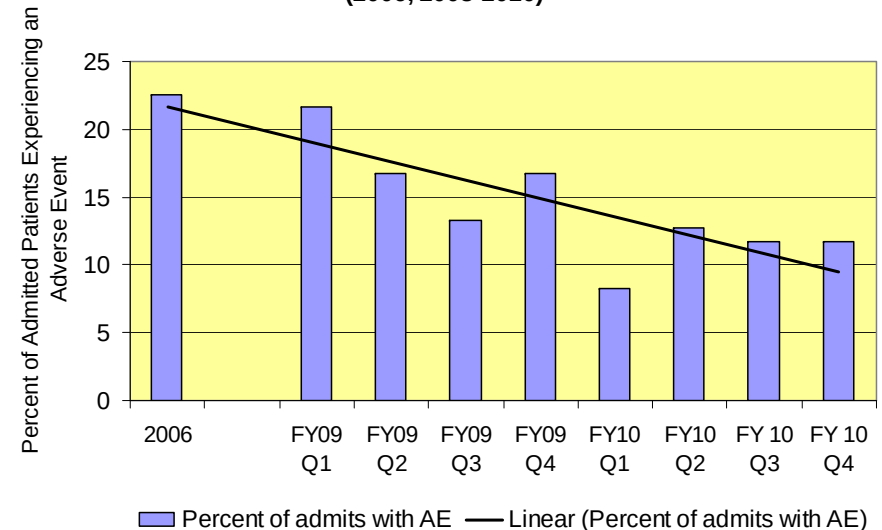
The Interventions

The Trigger Tool is applied to retrospective review of 20 records per month.

➢ 10 patient records from the total population of discharged patients are randomly selected every 2 weeks.
➢ A team of 2 RN's review each record for triggers (i.e. elevated INR, readmit within 30 days, glucose < 50 mg/dl)
➢ If a trigger is found, a focused review is conducted to determine if harm is associated with the event
➢ If harm has occurred, there is a scale of severity assigned to each event
➢ Findings are reviewed each month with physician leader
➢ Cases noted to have a higher level of harm are reported to the QI Director of the department involved

The Results/Progress to Date

Percent of Admitted Patients Experiencing an Adverse Event (2006, 2008-2010)

Legend: Percent of admits with AE — Linear (Percent of admits with AE)

Lessons Learned

➢ Harm events have decreased compared to results from a pre-Global Trigger chart review (2006). Levels of harm at BIDMC are below the IHI National Average benchmark of 35%.

Next Steps/What Should Happen Next

Continue to utilize the IHI Global Trigger Tool to monitor for areas of vulnerability and to identify issues that may contribute to patient harm.

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