What is the Current State of Patient Education After *Clostridium difficile* Infection?

Christina DeBenedictus BA1, Jacob John APRN2, Michelle Hecker MD3, Curtis J. Donskey MD4, and Payal K. Patel MD, MPH1,2,5

1 University of Michigan Medical School, Ann Arbor MI
2 Division of Infectious Diseases, Department of Internal Medicine, Veterans Affairs Ann Arbor Healthcare System, Ann Arbor, MI
3 MetroHealth Medical Center, Cleveland OH
4 Infectious Disease, Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland OH
5 Division of Infectious Diseases, Department of Internal Medicine, University of Michigan Medical School, Ann Arbor, MI

**BACKGROUND**

**Problem:**
- *Clostridium difficile* infection (CDI) is a common health-care associated infection that often recurs after treatment and is associated with reduced quality of life.
- High quality patient engagement and education could reduce the risk for transmission and reinfection.
- Many centers don’t have patient education protocols in place.

**Objective:**
- Evaluate the presence of CDI patient education at multiple clinical institutions.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of patient education materials
- Incorporate findings into improvements for patient education.

**METHODS**

**Survey of institutions:**
- We surveyed 18 institutions, including academic VA and community hospitals regarding CDI-specific patient education:
  - Availability of written educational materials on CDI
  - Confidence that education being provided
  - Confidence that patients understand the education

**Survey of CDI patients in 2 of the institutions:**
- CDI patients surveyed after completion of discharge instructions
- 25 item survey including:
  - Demographic information
  - Whether CDI Education was provided
  - Type of education provided
  - Other sources of CDI education (eg, internet search)
  - Impact of CDI on quality of life
  - Knowledge of CDI prevention practices:
    - Hand hygiene
    - Effective sporidical cleaning products
    - Risk factors for recurrence

**RESULTS**

**Survey of 18 Institutions on CDI Patient Education (Figure 1)**
- Of the 15 hospitals responding to the survey, 11 (73%) reported having standardized written educational materials regarding CDI.
- Infection prevention personnel from 4 (27%) of the 15 hospitals were not confident that education was being implemented and 5 (33%) were not confident that patients understood the education.

**Survey of CDI Patients from 2 of the Hospitals**
- Of 40 patients surveyed, 24 (60%) reported getting some form of education about CDI prior to discharge.
- Of these 24 patients, 19 (79%) reported that education was provided by a healthcare provider, and 5 (21%) received written information about CDI.
- Of the 40 patients surveyed, 14 (35%) reported utilizing resources on their own to learn about CDI.

**Patient Knowledge regarding CDI Prevention (Figure 2)**
- Of the 40 CDI patients, 8 (20%) chose either hand sanitizer or a bleach containing product to wash their hands (correct response: soap and water hand wash).
- 9 patients (23%) chose either antiseptic wipes or soap and water as the best agent to clean their bathrooms (correct response: bleach).
- 21 patients (53%) chose not keeping themselves clean or not taking a probiotic as the most significant risk for recurrence (correct response: antibiotic use).

**How Does C. Diff Impact Your Quality of Life?**
- 26 of the 40 CDI patients surveyed (65%) reported that CDI adversely affected their quality of life.
- The greatest risk for getting sick (26 of the 40 CDI patients surveyed, 65%) reported that CDI infection was a significant risk for reoccurrence.

**CONCLUSIONS**

- Many hospitals provide patients with CDI educational materials.
- However, substantial deficiencies exist in how the patient understands and remembers these materials.
- Patients showed a lack of recall regarding basic CDI prevention measures, especially regarding risk of future antibiotic use.
- CDI patient education could be a good target for stewardship programs and could engage nursing partners in stewardship.
- Involving patients in stewardship, particularly patients who have been through CDI, could be an innovative way to avoid unnecessary antibiotic use and educate the public.

For more information: christina.deben@gmail.com

@Payal_Patel