Clinical guidelines aim to optimise patient care, both safety and quality, by providing recommendations based on high-quality medical evidence, national and local policy with flexibility for patient choice. They decrease adverse events due to variations in clinical practice, particularly relevant for the acutely ill patient.

In 2016 The Dudley Clinical Guideline Group was established. Previously new guidelines were reviewed once by the policy group and there was no collaborative group working on the generation of guidelines required within the Trust.

The Dudley Clinical Guidelines Group is formed of mainly junior doctors working throughout the Trust, meeting once monthly. This has allowed for increased scrutiny over the new guidelines – with the aim to improve the quality and usability for the medical staff. Additionally we work on the generation of new guidelines and accessibility issues.

AIMS

Aims of this closed loop audit were:
- Compare the availability of local trust clinical guidelines against the agreed standard, regional consortium guidelines
- Assess the accessibility of clinical guidelines to medical staff across the trust.

THE PROBLEM

In 2017 when audited, the Trust clinical guidelines did not fulfil their purpose:
1. Up to date clinical guidelines were not available for common conditions
2. The available guidelines were poorly organised.

METHODS

Retrospective analysis of the intranet clinical guideline hits for May 2018 was performed.
- The number of trust clinical guidelines available was compared to audit standard.
- Frequency of access was recorded on an individual and department wide basis.

We also received feedback from junior doctors working within the Trust via an electronic survey system, n=27.

RESULTS

ACCESSIBILITY

The 2017 audit interventions have led to an increase in overall accessibility of the guidelines with a gradual increase in the total guidelines accessed from Nov-16 to May-18.

There are two different ways in which guidelines can be accessed:
1) Clicking on portal tabs (Hub Hits)
2) Using the search bar

The reduction in Hub Hits suggests effectiveness in re-design of the portal.

IMPLEMENTING CHANGE - AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

The Dudley Clinical Guidelines Group will continue meeting monthly to:
1. Review new guidelines that have been produced.
2. We will continue to identify top 10 most needed guidelines and generation via a target driven approach, obtaining senior clinical collaboration from each department.
3. Work on creating a new Russell’s Hall Hospital Clinical Guidelines page on the Induction app to improve accessibility. Promoting this and our aim for it to be incorporated into new junior doctors induction when starting at our Trust.

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

The Dudley Clinical Guidelines Group is an excellent example of a system lead by junior staff to improve clinical guidelines in a Trust, and in doing so patient safety and decision making. Whilst further improvement is required, there has been year on year improvement in both availability and accessibility of the Trust guidelines shown by annual audit activity.

Currently 56% of the junior doctors surveyed are using the Trust guidelines daily and 30% weekly. This shows the clinical importance of continuing to improve availability and accessibility of the guidelines in order to help improve patient safety, continuity and quality of care within our Trust.