

# Changing diabetes®

## Using technology to improve inpatient diabetes care

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The diabetes team at East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust produces a fortnightly publication *Diabytes*, which is published electronically on the front page of the Trust's extranet. *Diabytes* was first published in June 2011 with the aim of improving the care of inpatients with diabetes through the use of information technology. The idea stemmed primarily from the results of the National Diabetes Inpatient Audit (Health and Social Care Information Centre, 2011) and the National Patient Safety Agency alert on the safe use of insulin (2010). In addition, limitations in access to non-mandatory training, due to lingering financial constraints in the NHS, encouraged the diabetes team to seek to share information locally through other means.

### Objectives

The key objectives of this publication are:

- To provide relevant information about diabetes on a regular basis using the Trust's extranet as the platform.
- To enable all staff involved in the care of people with diabetes to access opportunistic training without the need to leave their clinical areas.
- To enable staff to update on issues around diabetes in a way that is cost-neutral and without the need for additional training.
- To enable staff to learn about both basic and advanced diabetes management, with the aim of positively impacting on the care they provide to inpatients with diabetes.
- To ensure that the various aspects of diabetes care are presented to staff in a user-friendly and interesting manner.

All articles are written by the diabetes specialist nurses and reviewed by the team prior to publication. Once agreed, they are emailed to colleagues in the IT department to be posted on the extranet page. Each edition covers one topic and strictly follows the "*Diabytes* code" of being short, concise and easy to read. Each edition is also disseminated

to the ward clerks and Diabetes Link nurses for them to print and post on the "Diaboards" in their respective wards/units. The extranet also provides a link to previous editions of *Diabytes*, which enables healthcare professionals to refer to them when needed.

### Audit

In November 2011, we performed a snapshot audit of the publication but only received 20 evaluations. This was repeated in November 2012 and 57 of 60 evaluation forms were returned from qualified nursing staff.

Overall, 91% of results in the 2012 audit were positive, compared to 84% in the 2011 audit. Negative scores were mostly related to insufficient time to read *Diabytes*.

One year on, the evaluation of *Diabytes* has shown that it continues to be well received and is achieving what it set out to achieve – improving staff knowledge of diabetes care and, ultimately, improving the standards of care for inpatients with diabetes. It has already been recognised locally by winning the East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust award in February 2013 in the "Using Technology to Improve Care" category, as well as gaining an accolade at the Sussex Proud to Care Nursing Award "Commitment" category.

*Diabytes* does not replace the need for face-to-face staff training, but with all the financial and staffing constraints we currently face in the NHS, we found it to be an easy, effective, innovative and cost-effective way of providing updates to staff on the vast areas of inpatient diabetes care. ■

Health and Social Care Information Centre (2011) *National Diabetes Inpatient Audit*. Available at: <http://www.hscic.gov.uk/diabetesinpatientaudit> (accessed 25.06.13)

National Patient Safety Agency (2010) *Rapid Response Report: Safer administration of insulin*. NPSA, London. Available at: <http://bit.ly/16cnuE> (accessed 25.06.13)



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