Closing the research-practice gap in healthcare:

The development and usability evaluation of a patient handling incident investigation toolkit

Aims

This research describes the development and useability evaluation of a system-thinking approach for investigating injuries to staff due to patient handling, referred to as the Patient Handling Review of Systems (PHIRES) Toolkit. The purpose of the PHIRES is:

Improve compliance with the Victorian OHS Regulation requiring workplaces to review and revise risk controls following the report of an musculoskeletal disorder.

Optimise the allocation of resources to control the risks associated with patient handling; and

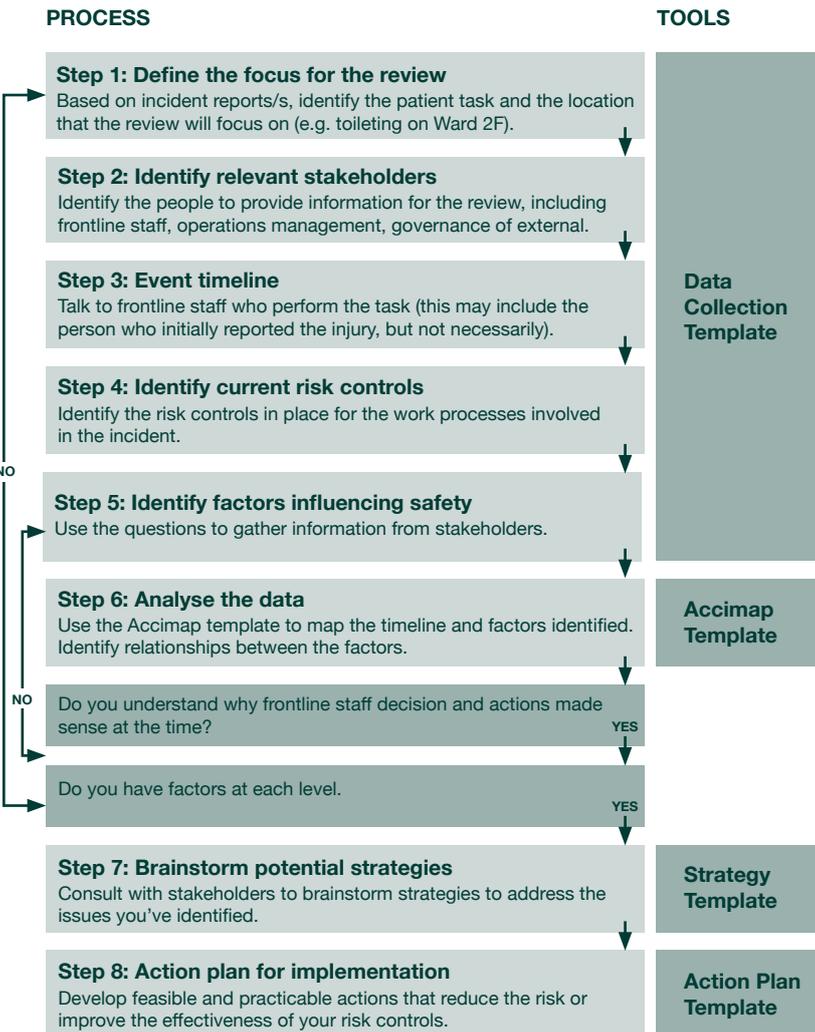Optimise risk controls to prevent future patient handling injuries;

Improve collaboration across all levels of the healthcare system in the prevention of patient handling injuries.

Methods

The prototype PHIRES Toolkit was designed in collaboration with two universities, WorkSafe Victoria and health services in Victoria, Australia. Four Manual Handling Co-ordinators (three females, one male) from three health services participated in the implementation and evaluation of the PHIRES.

RESULTS: DEVELOPMENT

PROCESS

TOOLS

Step 1: Define the focus for the review
Based on incident reports/s, identify the patient task and the location that the review will focus on (e.g. toileting on Ward 2F).

Step 2: Identify relevant stakeholders
Identify the people to provide information for the review, including frontline staff, operations management, governance of external.

Step 3: Event timeline
Talk to frontline staff who perform the task (this may include the person who initially reported the injury, but not necessarily).

Step 4: Identify current risk controls
Identify the risk controls in place for the work processes involved in the incident.

Data Collection Template

NO

Step 5: Identify factors influencing safety
Use the questions to gather information from stakeholders.

Step 6: Analyse the data
Use the Accimap template to map the timeline and factors identified. Identify relationships between the factors.

Accimap Template

NO

Do you understand why frontline staff decision and actions made sense at the time?   YES

Do you have factors at each level.   YES

Step 7: Brainstorm potential strategies
Consult with stakeholders to brainstorm strategies to address the issues you've identified.

Strategy Template

Step 8: Action plan for implementation
Develop feasible and practicable actions that reduce the risk or improve the effectiveness of your risk controls.

Action Plan Template

RESULTS: EVALUATION

Successfully completed the majority of steps without assistance of the research team.

Identified factors at each level of the system-thinking framework.

Generated actions that were aligned with system thinking principles.

Reported the Toolkit was a useful and comprehensive method for reviewing incidents.

CONCLUSION

The prototype PHIRES Toolkit provides a standardised process for examining the work system following the report of a patient handling injury. This study provides evidence that systems-thinking models can be effectively translated into tools to help practitioners drive systemic change in healthcare. The PHIRES Toolkit is undergoing further development and evaluation.

For more information

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