

Huntington Hospital Risk Management

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Introduction

Huntington Hospital is one of the best in both the state of New York and the whole country; its greatness comes from huge investments that ensure smooth operations and management of risks and challenges that arise. Last year, the hospital received a grade C in the safety rankings by the Leapfrog Group, illustrating that it still has major work to do to improve its quality element. One of the major risks that may have diminished the ranking of the facility is the threat of hospital-acquired infections.

Healthcare-Acquired Infections (HAIs)

Healthcare-acquired infections include those unanticipated infections acquired during healthcare delivery and in any healthcare delivery setting, such as in ambulances. HAIs are one of the greatest risks within hospital settings since when attending to patients with different diseases, the environment is exposed to infectious microorganisms such as antibiotic-resistant (AR) bacteria. Some of the hospital-acquired infections include infections of surgical wounds, urinary tract infections and staph infections, e.g., methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA). HAIs pose a great threat to the delivery of healthcare since they could lead to morbidity, prolonged hospital admission, additional diagnosis and treatment, increased medication costs or even death (Khan, Baig, & Mehboob, 2017).

Any patient is at risk of contracting HAI, although vulnerability differs among populations, such as it is high in children and those with compromised immunity. According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), approximately one in every patient in a hospital has at least one HAI, while the healthcare setting experiences over 1.7 million cases of healthcare-associated infections in the country annually (CDC, 2017). Research notes that if health professionals, employees at health facilities and patients are aware of HAIs and take measures of prevention, then infections can be reduced by more than 70%.

The path of remedying this risk of HAIs was reached after the incidence of such infections started increasing. The hospital board came together and discussed the issue after a discussion with all heads of departments. The board then set out mitigation strategies while a private agency was contracted to audit all health systems and find out the areas associated with the risk. The audit also utilized hospital data to identify the prevalence of infections in different locations and prioritize the remedy measures. After the audit, a comprehensive plan to address HAIs was set up, as discussed in the steps below. Fortunately, the mitigation mechanisms are long-term and will continually contribute to the development of the health facility.

Steps Placed in Addressing HAIs

When the cases of HAIs increased within Huntington Hospital mid-last year, the hospital management team, in consultation with health personnel in the facility, came up with strategies to alleviate the risk. Hospital sanitation was the first major component suggested for addressing HAIs. This basic component was addressed to all people within the facility at any given time, including patients, visitors, health personnel and any other worker at the organization. An audit of the sanitation systems was done, and to date, they are operational and in line with current standards, and only those with the required knowledge are allowed to operate them.

According to Septimus (2014), one great strategy in handling HAIs involves informing all people within the facility on the basic infection control techniques to prevent the spread of infections. At Huntington Hospital, posters were placed in strategic places, e.g., the wards, waiting rooms and offices, informing people on how they should handle different wastes. Other sanitation measures included ensuring that protective gear is provided in all departments and encouraging hand hygiene and general sanitation during surgery. The status of sanitation in the facility is currently okay with regular inspections carried out to ensure that there is no laxity. The infection control committee set up in the hospital ensures proper surveillance, inspection, and implementation of mitigation measures to ensure the eradication of HAI.

The hospital also made a commitment to fighting antimicrobial resistance, which is a major challenge in the fight against HAIs. All nurses and doctors were trained on the emerging issue of multi-drug resistance and the importance of stewardship in antimicrobial use. Presently, stewardship in antimicrobial use is active in Huntington Hospital, where the drugs are used sparingly in the right dosage and within the appropriate time to maintain efficacy. Khan, Baig, & Mehboob, (2017), concur that Antimicrobial utilization ought to justify the right clinical diagnosis or an infection causing microorganism.

Results

The measures placed in dealing with HAIs at Huntington Hospital brought positive results, as records from the facility show a reduction in the incidence of infection. Patient outcomes improved while death and morbidity due to HAIs in the facility drastically reduced. Compared to the past ratings I believe that the rank of Huntington Hospital has gone up due to improved systems that cannot compare to the past that was faced with disorganization. The confidence levels among clients improved and the number of patients seeking care in the facility has increased.

Methods Adopted By Other Facilities

The strategies adopted by other health facilities are associated with those used at Huntington Hospital. It should be noted that the facility already had in place a system to prevent and reduce cases of HAIs and the ones discussed above were just a support and encouragement to uphold the laid down systems. More than 130 health facilities are found in New York, and all are required to have HAI management plans to tackle the threat of infections.

One of the strategies used by many neighboring hospitals is the H.E.L.P. C.A.R.E. strategy. This stands for hand hygiene, environmental cleanliness, leadership, proper utilization of personal protective equipment, consistency in evidence-based practice handling antimicrobial resistance, respiratory hygiene and evaluation of systems. In full implementation, this strategy would completely address the HAI menace in a wholesome manner.

Effects Of Risk Mitigation On Quality

Prevention of HAIs is a vital component in ensuring high-quality and safe healthcare. Health professionals are entrusted with the lives of individuals; hence, quality care provision is essential. When HAIs are minimized through sticking to evidence-based practice then care services will end with better health outcomes. In such circumstances, patient errors are minimized; hence, patient satisfaction levels increase while their safety in healthcare provision is assured. In the course of HAI prevention, doctor-patient relationships have improved, patients have become more informed about HAIs, and they are making informed health choices that do not expose them to infection.

In the path of addressing HAI risk, the quality of the hospital environment has greatly improved. Employee satisfaction and motivation levels have improved due to the positive outcomes of their efforts. Cleanliness is evident in all areas of the facility, hence the reduction of occurrence and spread of HAIs. Occupational health and safety among health professionals have immensely improved with the introduction of safety measures like the use of personal protective equipment. A hospital inspection council was created to continually audit hospital systems that may contribute to the development of HAIs. This council has been significant in addressing any threats at a speedy level compared to the past.

Infection control programs in the hospital have encouraged the provision of resources, e.g., medical equipment that improves working conditions as well as patient outcomes. A reorganization of the hospital's staff was made to ensure that every individual is in the department that is in according to their knowledge and skills. The surgical section of the hospital has been improved, making it a choice for most patients in the state.

In general, addressing the issue of HAIs in Huntington Hospital has contributed to a reduction in the duration of patients admitted to the wards since they recover swiftly without the risk of developing

other infections. In this way, mortality and morbidity have been reduced while patient confidence in the services offered has improved. Affordability, an important aspect of quality is being achieved through mitigating the risk of HAIs. Patients are spending less due to a decrease in costs per hospitalization and length of stay in the facility.

Conclusion

HAIs are a major threat in all hospital settings, and addressing them entails surveillance, prevention, and the setting of systems that guide the practices of health personnel. In the smooth mitigation of HAI threats, a facility would be going ahead to improve the quality of its operation. Huntington Hospital has improved its greatness in New York after addressing the HAI issue, and it remains a hospital of choice for many. Risk assessment and mitigation is a vital component of organizational growth since it allows an institution to address factors that pose a risk to quality development.

References

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