



Mouth Care Matters – Improving the Oral Health of Hospitalised Patients

'Mouth Care Matters' is part of a Health Education England, Kent, Surrey and Sussex initiative to improve the oral health of hospitalised patients.

East Surrey Hospital had a very good CQC inspection last year but one of the suggested improvements was to have a review of mouth care. The inspection found that patients had dry mouths and there was no evidence of oral health assessments in the nursing notes.

There is evidence to show that poor oral health can lead to a deterioration in general health and hence lengthen hospital stays for patients. Currently nurses and nursing assistants have minimal or no training in providing mouth care; this means that vulnerable patients who need assistance often do not receive it.

East Surrey Hospital is currently developing a programme that aims to improve the oral health and hence general health of hospitalised patients. This will involve:

1. Interactive hands on training with nursing staff in the dental simulation lab
2. The introduction of mandatory mouth care assessment for all in-patients
3. Ward based follow on training so nurses can be observed and have assistance if required
4. Training for doctors in diagnosing and prescribing for mouth conditions.
5. Training of mouth care champions for each ward

Summary of work to date

- Literature Search
 - *Highlighted the negative effects of hospitalisation stays on oral health and the links between oral health and systemic health.*
- Focus groups with hospital matrons/ senior staff/infection control
 - *Identified that mouth care is nearly always carried out by nursing assistants who have no mouth care training. Practice and knowledge amongst staff is low, for example the use of pink foam swabs, saline after tooth brushing in critical care, no knowledge of mouth care gels, aspirating toothbrushes, non-foaming toothpastes and mouth*

guards. Nursing staff are not recording mouth care and would really like help with this and the development of an easy to use assessment form. Nursing staff do not always know how to access help and advice from the dental services. IT skill amongst nursing staff varies and this would be a barrier to E-Learning.

- Survey of nurses' mouth care training and current practice
 - *47 respondents from across a range of different wards at East Surrey Hospital completed this survey. The majority of the respondents were either nurses or nursing assistants.*
 - *95% of nursing staff believe that assessing and providing mouth care is part of their role as a nurse.*
 - *Only 53% of the nursing staff that completed the survey had received training in assessing patients' mouths and/or providing or assisting with oral care. Of those who had been trained, the majority had received it as part of their nursing/nursing assistant training.*
 - *89% of nursing staff who answered the survey stated that they did provide mouth care to patients on the wards.*
 - *64% of nursing staff said that they would like to receive training in mouth care, the majority (60%) stating that they would like interactive hands-on teaching.*
- Audit of mouth care records in Hospital Notes
 - *Only 15% of notes audited had a completed mouth care assessment, all of which were from intensive care or high dependency units*
 - *There were no mouth care assessments in any of the medical wards*
- Audit of patient tooth brushing practice
- Liaising with leads for critical care and the elderly to consider auditing whether hospital acquired pneumonia rates decrease after the Mouth Care Matters roll-out
- Links with speech and language therapy lead
 - *Speech and language therapists state that they have had very little training in oral care and would like to be trained so that they are following up-to-date evidence based practice.*
- Mouth Care Matters promotion
 - *'Mouth Care Matters' stand in the Hospital for a week outside the hospital restaurant (18/2/15). This gave us the opportunity to talk to staff about the training and show them products that can help them deliver good mouth care.*
 - *Article to be published in the Hospital Journal on the training programme and why we are doing it.*
 - *'A patient story' to be presented to the patient safety executive board, 25/2/15. A case of a patient with dementia who had a traumatic ulcer on her lip that was poorly managed by the ward and emphasises why mouth care training is so important.*

- Establishing the correct mouth care tools to use
 - *Meetings with various companies looking at different tooth brushes, dry mouth gels and non-foaming tooth pastes and alternatives to pink foam swabs.*
 - *Medicines management committee meetings to seek agreement to change hospital procurement and additions to formulary.*

Next steps

March 2015

- Pilot sessions 19th and 24th March
- Three Hour interactive sessions for nurses of all grades and speech language therapists
- 20 trainees per session, held in dental simulation lab

April

- Refinement of training programme

May onwards

- Roll out of training across East Surrey Hospital. This will involve further training sessions and we plan to make this training part of SASH nurses' mandatory certified training.
- Training on the wards; this will involve dental staff being present on the ward for about a week, supporting staff with mouth care.
- Training for hospital doctors prescribing on the wards.
- Mouth Care Matters champions (Mouth Care Matters part 2); training for ward staff identified as having an interest in mouth care.

From September 2015

- Roll out to other hospitals in KSS

Establishing effectiveness of the programme

This will involve:

1. Post training evaluation
2. Re-audit of hospital notes
3. Re-audit of patient questionnaire
4. Hospital acquired pneumonia rates and ventilator assisted pneumonia rates.

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