The Diabetic FOCUS

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Palmetto Tri-County Internal Medicine, Lancaster, SC.

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Problem list

- **Lower Extremity Amputation (LEA) is one of the most devastating complications of diabetes, causing disability in over 50,000 Americans each year.**
- **In 1997, 36 LEA were performed in Lancaster county .**
- **75% of LEA can be prevented with proper foot care.**
- **How can we institute foot screening for all diabetic patients at Palmetto-Tri County Internal Medicine?**
- **Foot screening can be time consuming.**

Aim

- **To ensure that diabetic patients in the office of Palmetto-Tri county Internal Medicine receive a foot screen with every visit.**

Measures

- The percentage of random charts with documentation of foot screen.
- The number of nurses in the practice who can perform an adequate foot screen.
- How often do the nurses think that the diabetic patients should have their feet examined?
- How many nurses believe that diabetic patients should have their feet examined at every visit?

Possible changes for improvement

- To institute foot screening for all diabetics with every office visit.
- To educate the nurses on how to perform an adequate foot screen.
- To introduce a foot assessment sheet that will enable the nurses in the practice to identify the patients with high-risk feet.
- To refer diabetic patients with high risk feet to the Certified nurse practitioner.

PDSA Cycle 1

- **PLAN - Develop a visual aid and foot assessment sheet.**
- **DO - We developed a visual aid and foot assessment sheet and asked for feedback.**
- **STUDY - Concerns were raised regarding the vocabulary of the visual aid.**
- **ACT - Changes were made to the visual aid and an alternate visual aid developed by one of the drug companies was discovered.**

PDSA Cycle 2

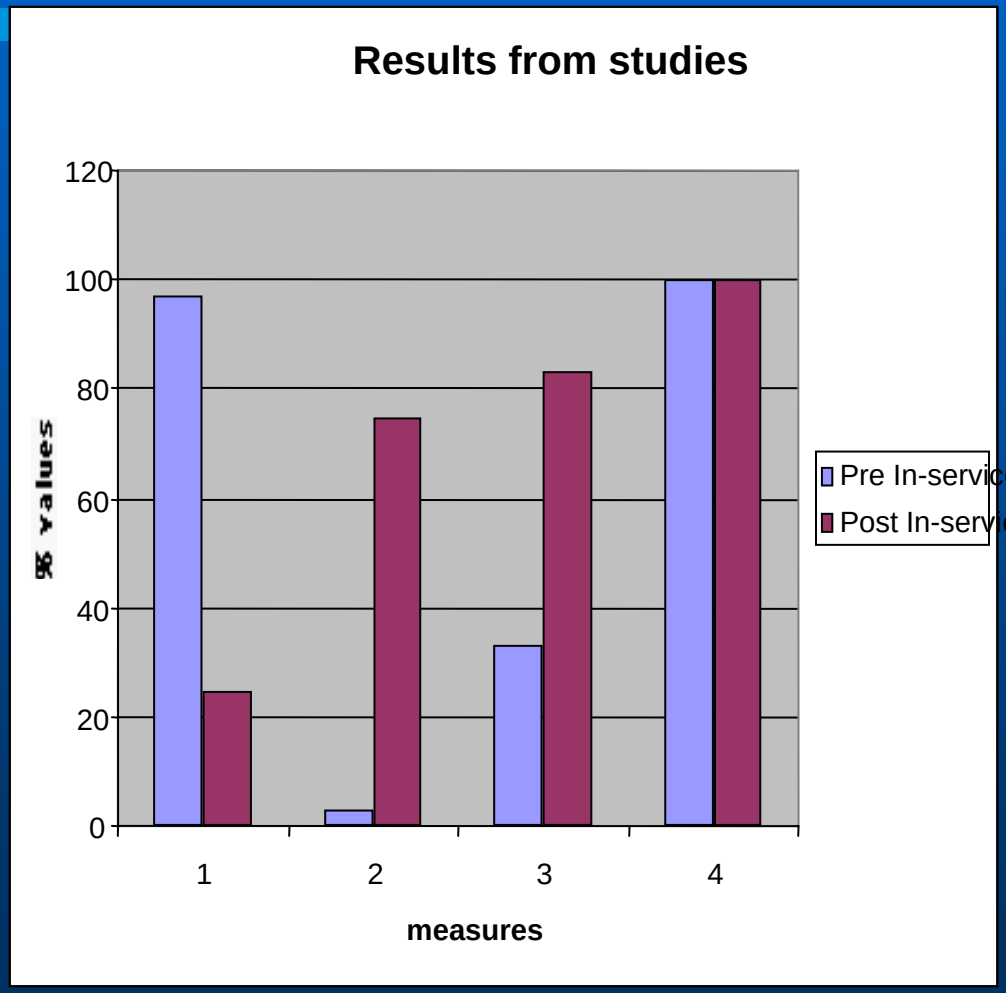
- **PLAN - (1) Educate the nurse on how to perform an adequate foot assessment.**
- **(2) Survey the nurses and practitioners.**
- **DO - (1) We did an in-service on how to perform an adequate foot assessment.**
- **(2) We surveyed the nurses and practitioners.**
- **STUDY - (1) Pre and post in-service: All nurses and nurse practitioners thought that the diabetic patients should have their feet examined.**
- **(2) Pre and post in-service: All the nurses thought that the diabetic patients should always have their feet examined.**
- **ACT - We began a system where the nurses perform foot screens on every diabetic patient at every visit and refer the ones with high risk feet to Mrs. Bowers, CFNP.**

PDSA Cycle 3

- **PLAN** - (1) Review random charts of diabetic patients pre and post implementation of changes.
  (2) Survey the nurses and practitioners post institution of foot screens.
- **DO** - (1) We reviewed random charts of diabetic patients, before and after the institution of foot screens.
  (2) We surveyed the nurses and practitioners after the institution of foot screens.
- **STUDY** - (1) There was a drastic improvement in the percentage of diabetic patients charts with a documented foot exam.
  (2) The practitioners thought that the mandatory foot screens for diabetic patients did not affect the flow of patient care.
  (3) The nurses had some concerns about the foot screens and they had some suggestions about the direction of the foot screening.
- **ACT** -The nurses concerns and suggestions were discussed with Mrs. Bowers.

Data

- 1. % of diabetic charts without documented foot exams
- 2. % of diabetic charts with documented foot exams
- 3. % of nurses that can do foot screens
- 4. % of nurses in favor of foot screen at every visit.



Post institution of foot screen- Nurses suggestions

- **Foot exams should not be done at every visit.**
- **Ask about the condition of the patient's feet at every visit and if patient complains of a particular problem then examine their feet.**
- **Do quarterly foot exams.**
- **The foot screening sheet needs to be simplified.**

Lessons learned:

- It is easier to improve than it is to change a system.
- A lot of changes cannot be made within one month.
- Cooperation and dialogue between those instituting the change and those most affected by the change is essential for a successful transition.