Global Triggers for Detecting Harm

The Problem

Traditional methods to identify adverse events, such as incident reporting may not be comprehensive enough to capture all adverse events. The IHI (Institute for Healthcare Improvement) Global Trigger Tool provides a way to measure and monitor the overall level of harm within a hospital from the perspective of the patient. BIDMC began using this process in March 2008.

Aim/Goal

The BIDMC Goal is to eliminate preventable harm by 2012. The Global Trigger Tool provides a mechanismto identify sources of harm so that we can develop performance improvement interventions to prevent these harm events in the future.

The Team

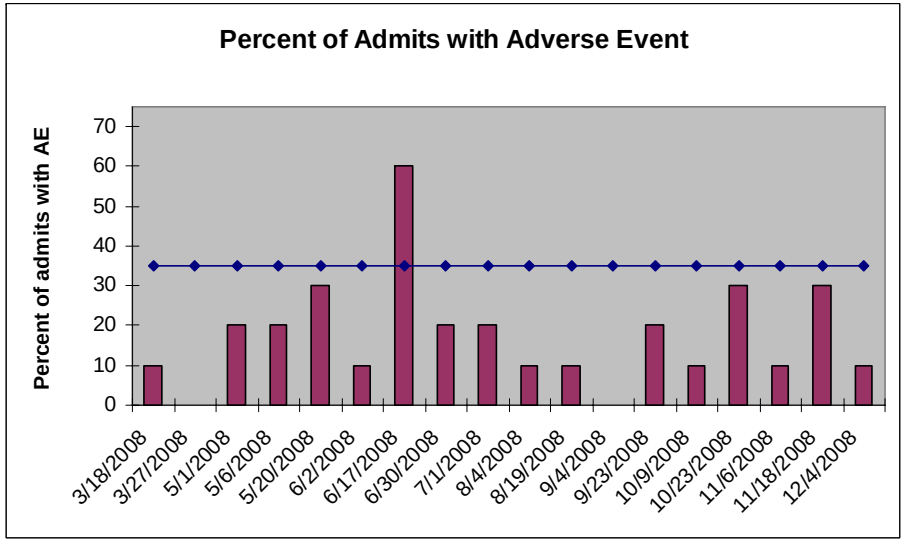
- Bonnie Austin RN
- Alex Carbo MD
- Mary Fay RN
- Cheryle Totte RN
- Carolyn Wheaton RN

The Interventions

The Trigger Tool is applied in a retrospective review of 20 records per month.

- 10 patient records from the total population of discharged patients are randomly selected every 2 weeks.
- A team of 2 RN's review each record for triggers (ie Elevated INR)
- If a trigger is found, there is a focused review to determine if Harm is associated with the event
- If harm has occurred there is a severity assigned to each harm event
- Nurse review their findings each month with physician leader

The Results/Progress to Date



*****Blue line represent the average percentage for hospitals as they begin to use the trigger tool (as reported by IHI)***

Lessons Learned

This measurement strategy is more sensitive than voluntary reporting so adverse event rates may be higher using this method. The trigger tool provides a macro level measurement of patient safety efforts over time. Over time trends of vulnerability may emerge for BIDMC. The tool does not distinguish preventable harm from all harm events.

Next Steps/What Should Happen Next

We have completed our first year of review. We are currently doing a look back at a 6 month period in 2006 to see if we have made progress in our efforts.

Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center | A teaching hospital of Harvard Medical School | The Silverman Institute For Healthcare Quality and Safety

For More Information Contact
Pat Folcarelli RN, PhD Director of Patient Safety