Sustaining Gains in Preventing Blood and Body Fluid Splashes in the ICU

The Problem

Splashes with blood and body fluid are a regular occurrence that not only puts employees at risk for HIV, Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C infection, but can also cause a tremendous amount of stress to the person who gets splashed. After initial interventions to prevent splashes in the ICU, number of days between splashes went up by 125%. Gains in quality improvement tend to fall off after initial implementation.

Aim/Goal

To sustain previous improvements and ultimately eliminate splashes in the ICU by continuing awareness efforts around splashes.

The Team

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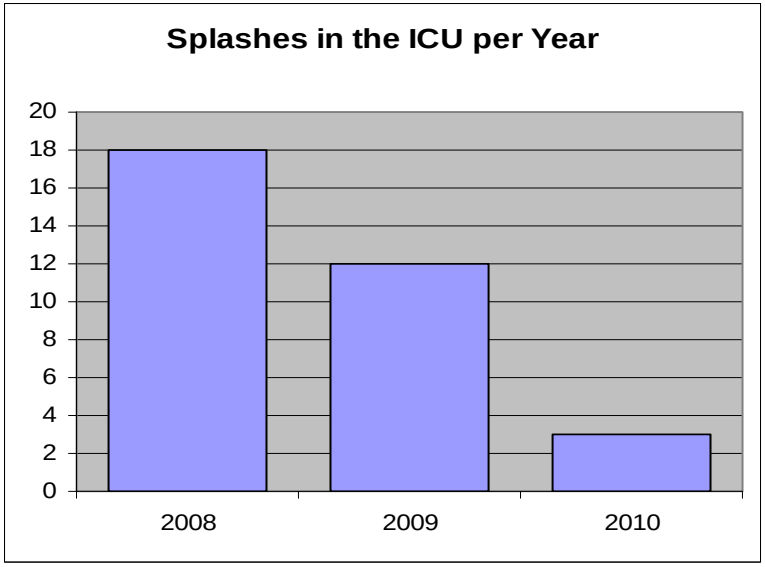
The Interventions

- Replaced all masks (includes visor) with ties with masks with earloops
- Monitored mask usage in the ICUs
- Held an employee safety fair to engage staff in changes in practice
- Continued awareness to all staff on proper protective measures
- Issued broadcast emails on ICU splash incidents and during what procedure it occurred, and number of days since previous splash in an ICU
- Educated all incoming medical house staff on splashes and personal protective equipment

Progress to Date

Prior to the intervention splashes were occurring on average every 16 days in the ICUs at BIDMC. After the intervention number of days between splashes went up by 125%. There has been continued success in 2010 with only three splashes in the ICU throughout the year. This demonstrates an 83% decrease in splashes per year since 2008.



Lessons Learned

- Instability of the supply chain can affect ability to comply with best practice.
- Continued reinforcement of a behavior leads to an eventual culture change

Next Steps

- Ongoing efforts to raise awareness of splash occurrences
- Ongoing monitoring and reporting of performance data to staff
- Design new techniques to prevent splashes
- Work with other areas of the hospital including the OR to spread what we learned

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