

Abstract

Background and Purpose:

Mucositis is a common side effect of cytotoxic cancer treatment and conditioning for HSCTs which can lead to malnutrition, weight loss, and systemic infection. Nurses who care for pediatric and young adult oncology and HSCT patients often have difficulty identifying mucositis leading to inconsistent practices in treating, documenting, and education about the condition. The purpose of this project is to improve pediatric oral mucositis assessment by using a validated screening tool.

Methods:

This was a quality improvement project with a pre-post design and one group, focused on inpatient pediatric oncology nurses at an urban academic medical center in the northeast. This design focused on the implementation of an oral mucositis assessment tool into the EHR, ChIMES, to improve patient care and nursing confidence, and evaluated the feasibility and compliance of documentation of this tool. The intervention was education on oral mucositis and ChIMES. Measurements used were weekly analysis of assessment completion and review of data from staff surveys.

Results:

A percent change evaluating documentation compliance calculated over the 12-week period was found to be 105%. Results (n=11) demonstrated that there was a statistically significant improvement in nurses ability to assess for mucositis in verbal patients ($p=0.042$), their likelihood to assess for mucositis regardless of visible lesions ($p=0.034$), and that staff were familiar with where to document mucositis in the EHR ($p=0.034$).

Conclusions:

While this pilot quality improvement project did not produce statistically significant changes in nursing confidence of mucositis assessment, survey results demonstrate the utility of utilizing ChIMES in the EHR to assess for oral mucositis. Improving the assessment for mucositis will allow for timely identification, management, documentation and education on mucositis.

Implications:

As a result of the feasibility the success of this assessment on the pediatric oncology unit, this tool could be implemented in other pediatric units serving this population.

Keywords: Mucositis, assessment tool, pediatric, oncology, hematopoietic stem cell transplant (HSCT), electronic health record (EHR), Children's International Mucositis Evaluation Scale (ChIMES)