HEARTS IN THE AMERICAS
Regional Workshop

How to build a consensus to adopt and to improve a standardized treatment protocol for hypertension

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"CHANGE IS THE ONLY CONSTANT"

HERACLITUS: GREEK PHILOSOPHER

PROCESS FOR SUCCESSFUL CHANGE: Kotter

- Establish a "sense of urgency/burning platform"
- Form a powerful coalition/allies
- Create a vision for change
- Communicate the vision
- Empower others to act on the vision/remove obstacles
- Build on the change/create short-term wins
- Consolidate improvements producing more change
- Anchor the change/institutionalize the new approaches

1. Establish a "sense of urgency/burning platform"

- NCDs especially CVD is the leading cause of morbidity and mortality globally and in Latin America and the Caribbean.
- Hypertension is the leading risk factor for CVD.
- Hypertension control rates (>140/90 mmHg) are approximately 10-30% in Latin America and the Caribbean.
- Safe, effective, and affordable pharmacologic treatment for hypertension is available.
- Start honest discussions regarding how current practices have not been successful
- Examine opportunities to increase the control rates of hypertension.
- **The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results**

2. Create a powerful coalition/allies

- Promote the need for change at every venue and opportunity.

- Form a coalition of influential individuals and stakeholders from a variety of sources, disciplines, and health care professionals.

- Once together, the coalition needs to work as a team.

- Check the team for weak areas, i.e. is there a good mix of individuals regarding expertise, departments, and roles.

- Obtain baseline data about control rates and insure ability to track data for assessment of change success.

- **Develop a variety of algorithms/protocols, select one, and allow for flexibility to change/improve the algorithm/protocol as new developments occur.**

3. Create a vision for change

- Develop a vision for a standardized protocol, including best practices and the evidence behind the protocol.

- Promote the potential to markedly and rapidly increase hypertension control rates.

- Make the case that innovative protocols including the initial use of combination medications are available and affordable.

- Emphasize the direct effect that increasing hypertension control rates has on improving morbidity and mortality, as well as decreasing cost to the health-care system.

- **Develop a strategy to execute the algorithm/protocol.**

4. Communicate the vision

- Communicate the algorithm/protocol frequently and powerfully.
- Provide educational training opportunities about the algorithm/protocol for team members on all levels.
- Embed the message wherever and whenever possible.
- Address concerns promptly, openly, and honestly.
- Identify potential barriers to adherence to the algorithm/protocol and develop plans to overcome these barriers.
- Display readable charts in the clinic and patient care areas.
- **Incorporate the algorithm/protocol in all aspects of operations, including training, feedback, and performance reviews.**

5. Empower others to act on the vision/remove obstacles

- Empower all team members to participate in the adoption of the algorithm/protocol.

- Empower patients.

- Keep the algorithm simple and standardized.

- Promote "task shifting" to adopt and implement the algorithm/protocol.

- Frequently assess for barriers and address the barriers.

- Ensure that the organizational structure, job descriptions, performance, and compensation are in line with the vision.

- **Recognize and reward people for making change happen.**

6. Build on the change/create short-term wins

- Success begets success (motivation).

- Establish systems for monitoring and provide regular data on chosen indicators (i.e. control rates) for the change team, the system, and health-care providers.

- Create short term goals, not just a long term goal.

- Make sure early goals are achievable.

- **Communicate/celebrate successes!**

7. Consolidate improvements producing more change

- Build on early successes but maintain focus on longer term goals and indicators.

- Change projects often fail because success is declared too early.

- Build on successes and identify areas for improvement.

- **Continue to be flexible and adjust to new information/data.**

8. Anchor the change/institutionalize the new approaches

- The algorithm/protocol must become a core of the program.

- Make sure the algorithm/protocol's importance is seen in all aspects of the program and system structure.

- Leadership and staff need to continually support the program.

- Talk about the progress at every chance. Tell success stories.

- **Publicly recognize key individuals of the original team coalition.**

Conclusions

- Change is not easy, but it is possible and vital for improving care.
- Remember that change is a process – it will not happen overnight.
- Engaging your team, planning for the change, and evaluating along the way are essential.
- Don't forget to celebrate small successes and keep your eye on the goals.

Thank You