Improving Adherence to SSI Bowel Bundle Protocol and Audit Collection

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Background

- Surgical site infections (SSI) are the most common and costly of all hospital-acquired infections.
- SSIs account for 20% of all hospital-acquired infections.
- On my high-volume colorectal surgery unit, the current initiative includes:
  - SSI audits are collected after every bowel surgical case
  - Standardized SSI bowel bundle protocol practices
- There have been a decrease in SSI bowel audit completions
- The unit's targeted metric for SSI rate is ≤ 3.5% and our baseline is 5.5%.
- **Goal**: to improve adherence to SSI bowel bundle protocol and increase SSI audit collection to help decrease bowel SSIs on my surgical unit.

Description of Team

- Project leader/developer: Megan Piñon, BSN, RN. Delegated SSI champion and full-time nurse.
- Unit staff: 25 staff member participants. A mixture of nurses and surgical techs.

Preparation and Planning

- A short anonymous survey was developed and dispersed during the weekly morning meeting to the unit's surgical techs and nurses.
- The survey was focused on:
  - The staff's personal opinions on why SSI audit submissions are down
  - Barriers to adhering to the SSI bowel protocol.
- A small token of thanks was handed out upon completing the survey.

Assessment and Implementation

- The volume of completed bowel SSI audits has significantly decreased over time.
- During the height of the pandemic the shifting priorities, staff turnover with new leadership, and decreased ongoing education all have led to a decrease in audit completion.
- Data from the completed bowel SSI audits show that most of the metric categories have not met our benchmark goal of 90% compliance for the July-September 2022 timeframe.
- The baseline bowel infection rate for my unit is 5.5% for July 21'-March 22' with a goal of ≤ 3.5%.
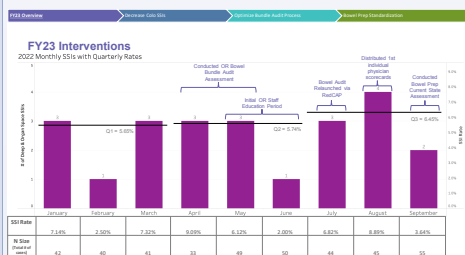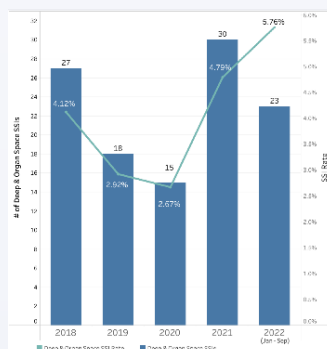
Outcome

- The results of the anonymous survey show that the biggest deterrent to following SSI Bowel protocol are:
  - attitudes/pushback (50%)
  - communication between team members (36%)
  - gap in staff education in bowel SSI protocol (28%)
- However, 60% of staff felt the audits helped them to better follow the SSI protocol and were mostly user-friendly.
- The biggest barrier to completing SSI audits are:
  - a gap in communication/ reminders that SSI audits are still being collected (66%)
  - forms were not readily available to them in the past (34%).

Bowel Audit Results

Question	No/Never	Sometimes	Yes/Always
How often do you observe the initial antibiotics administration time noted on the white board?	0%	28%	72%
How often do you observe a full 3-min Chloraprep drying time?	92%	8%	0%
How often were supplies changed after bowel anastomosis?	48%	52%	0%
How often is the 'bowel closing pack' utilized during closure?	28%	72%	0%
Do you feel that completing the SSI audits helps staff to better follow Bowel SSI protocol?	4.3%	34.8%	60.9%
Do you find the new Bowel SSI QR code user-friendly?	12.5%	n/a	87.5%

| What has been the biggest deterrent in adhering to SSI bowel protocol?	Gap in staff (including surgeon) education in bowel SSI protocol 19.4%	Not enough time/ trauma 13.9%	Barrier in communication between surgical team members 25%	Attitudes/ Pushback-observances in not wanting to take extra time/ precautions 41.7%

What has been the biggest barrier to completing SSI Audits in the past?	Gap in communication/ reminders that SSI Audits were still being collected 66.7%	Forms were not readily supplied and available 33.3%

Implications for Perioperative Nursing

- The anonymous survey shows that there has been a drift in practice on the test unit.
  - Mainly with reports of "drift in aseptic technique," "pushback" and bowel closure packs not being utilized.
  - Reinforcement of the SSI audits need to be given as most staff report they help them to better follow protocol.
- The results of the survey was given to management and the next steps include:
  - Teaching staff proper SSI protocol during huddles
  - Consistent reminders of SSI audits completions
- Currently there have been **ZERO SSI** infections from when staff started consistently completing SSI audits in November
- The anonymous survey was helpful to getting an accurate assessment of the drift in practices.
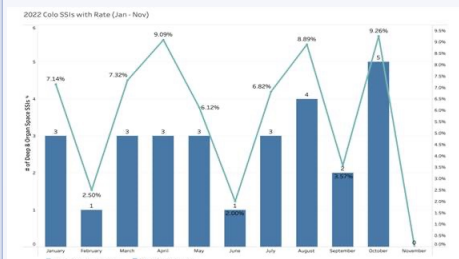
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