Implementing Clinical Dashboards: Older Person Mental Health Services

Northumberland, Tyne and Wear Foundation Trust
One of the key aims of the Clinical Dashboards pilot was to implement the technology into a variety of different care settings. At Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust (NTW) work is underway to implement Clinical Dashboards in Newcastle Older Persons Mental Health Services.

NTW have a vision to ‘deliver services that match the best in the world’ so utilising technology in the delivery of care is an essential element to facilitate one of the trusts’ priorities to ‘improve clinical and management decision making through the provision and development of effective information’.

**Tailoring the technology:**

The Older Persons mental health services pilot is an ambitious project that aims to implement four separate dashboards into the trust.

Dr Jonathan Richardson, Consultant in Old Age Psychiatry at the Centre for the Health of the Elderly, said:

“When we first looked into Clinical Dashboards we decided that there was scope to develop four separate dashboards in our trust. NTW is one of the largest mental health and disability trusts in England employing more than 7,000 staff, serving a population of approximately 1.4 million, providing services across an area totalling 2,200 square miles. We have a number of regional and national specialist services and in 2008 we received a Healthcare Commission rating of ‘excellent’ for our quality of service and ‘good’ for our use of resources.

“The Older Persons directorate in this trust has a large number of diverse patients so being able to tailor the data displayed on the dashboards was an immediate attraction.”

“The Older Persons mental health service, in Newcastle has undergone a transition and we have altered our methods of patient care, moving from a sector based approach to a team focused approach. Moving into a more team focused way of working requires data sharing, so Clinical Dashboards are a possible tool that will support this new way of working.”

**Metrics to make a difference:**

To successfully implement four separate Clinical Dashboards, the metrics needed to be accurately developed with input from clinical teams.

Dr Richardson said: “In the early stages of the pilot there was time dedicated to agreeing the metrics on the dashboard. Workshops and seminars were held with a multi-disciplinary team (MDT) to identify the measures for metrics.

“Working in a team that included clinicians, local managers, informaticians and directors helped to formulate our ideas and identify potential measures and their benefits across different specialities. The team work throughout the pilot was also very good.”

“Initially, the team had a long list of metrics that they wanted to see developed into a dashboard, however, this was not feasible at the pilot stage of a programme so we looked at metrics that we thought would reap the most significant benefits for both clinicians and patients.”

The Clinical Dashboards at NTW are split into four separate sets of metrics, the Memory Assessment and Management Service (MAMS) Dashboard, Community Mental Health Team Dashboard and two Acute Inpatient Ward Dashboards. These have all been implemented at the Castleside and Akenside inpatient wards.

Dr Richardson said: “It was important to consider a variety of factors when developing the metrics for the dashboards to ensure maximum delivery of results. We took on suggestions from clinicians as well as some of the suggestions within our Northumberland Tyne and Wear Mental Health Trust contract.

“In order for a ward to achieve its Accreditation for Inpatient Mental Health Services –
Older People (AIMS-OP) with the Royal College of Psychiatrists (RCPsych) it needs to demonstrate that a full multi-disciplinary review occurs at least once a week, with every patient. With this in mind, the metrics that we have developed for our Clinical Dashboards will potentially help us to electronically trace our performance and standardise our practices.

“The final dashboards look at a range of different metrics for example; incident tracking, the amount of service users and blood screening rates.”

**Potential Clinical benefits:**

Although still in the early stages of implementation, the team at NTW have already identified some potential benefits derived from the Clinical Dashboards technology.

“I think potentially there are a range of benefits from using the Clinical Dashboards tool. I was first attracted to get involved because I recognised that the tool is developed by clinicians and is driven by local measures. The flexibility of the technology was also a bonus as the team were able to tailor and change the metrics.”

“The Clinical Dashboards will also allow the measuring and bench marking of care quality by using accurate and relevant data, I think this will help improve care standards by identifying any weaknesses and areas for improvement.

“Clinical Dashboards also provide an instant audit, so that clinicians can take a snapshot of the care being administered. Before Clinical Dashboards, audits would be conducted by sifting through paper notes so having the information readily available increases productivity and data quality.

“In Older Persons mental health services, having an MDT review can greatly benefit a patient and can help more accurately identify a patients’ needs, helping to streamline the patient care pathway and is needed for RCPsych AIMS-OP accreditation.

“Perhaps the most significant benefit so far in Older Persons mental health services has been the increase in the amount of patients with a MDT review. Within just two weeks of the dashboards going live there was a dramatic rise in the recording of the MDT using the electronic patient record.

“Although this increase is over a short trend period, the significant rise in patients with an MDT record shows the power of readily available data and of benchmarking quality. The dashboards, in this case, raised awareness of an arising issue so that the teams could immediately resolve the problem.”

**Progressing the pilot:**

The team at NTW are currently focusing on training and fully implementing the dashboards in the pilot site. User groups have also been set up to evaluate the current dashboards and to monitor the metrics in use.

Dr Richardson said: “We are still in the very early stages of the dashboard pilot but already we have had significant interest and support from staff. In the initial pre-implementation staff survey, 77% of staff within the department felt that potentially the Clinical Dashboards would be either helpful or very helpful in their line of work.”

“The next stage is to support our staff to use the dashboards and once they are fully implemented we intend to carry out a full benefits realisation piece of work”.

“Due to the level of interest for the dashboard within NTW and we have set up a trust wide special interest group. I have also been appointed clinical lead, within NHS North East, to support the wider engagement with trusts across the North East.”
For further information on Clinical Dashboards please visit:
http://www.connectingforhealth.nhs.uk/systemsandservices/clindash
or e-mail clinicaldashboards@nhs.net