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Objective

The New England Spinal Cord Injury Toolkit (NESCIT) provides succinct, relevant and up-to-date educational information for care providers who may not have current expertise in treating people with a spinal cord injury (SCI).

Design

NESCIT consists of information on topics that a multi-disciplinary group of SCI professionals deemed to be very useful for people with SCI after discharge from acute rehabilitation as well as for clinicians treating SCI. These include: patient/family/caregiver education; autonomic dysreflexia; skin care; bladder management; bowel management; sexual health and fertility; and spasticity. The development of NESCIT was focused on providing resources to give pertinent and clinically useful information regarding each topic and its standard of care to help educate the care provider – or individual with SCI depending on the resource- easily, effectively and efficiently. NESCIT was disseminated to multiple health care professionals and people with an SCI in many settings.

Participants/Methods

NESCIT has been distributed to care providers in various formats, including in person, online and in paper format. It has been presented to clinical staff from rehabilitation facilities, skilled nursing facilities, home health care agencies and personal caregivers working with people with SCI, as well as to people with an SCI. These presentations and the inclusion of the Toolkit link in professional online newsletters and websites has exponentially increased page views and downloads.

Results

NESCIT is available online for free, public use. Education implementation of the Toolkit prompted inquiries from care providers and people with SCI for the NESCIT clinical support team, focusing on obtaining guidance regarding their specific needs. Comments received from recent surveys include, “Excellent presentation!”, “Fabulous education”, and requests for additional topics to be covered.

Future Plans

Currently, we are tracking inquiries, gathering website statistics, and survey results. This information and data will be used for the process and content improvement of NESCIT. Topics related to TBI, pain, orthosis use, aging with an SCI, psychosocial adjustment, resources and the rehabilitation process have been suggested by NESCIT users.

Conclusion

NESCIT along with one-on-one support from the clinical support team provides an easy to access and relevant education tool for care providers along the continuum of care for people with SCI.

Support

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Introduction

The New England Regional SCI Center facilitated development of the New England SCI Toolkit (NESCIT), a collaboration among New England medical centers that provide SCI care, with the goal of standardizing care throughout the region. Our primary objectives are to improve outcomes, decrease the frequency of complications, and provide educational resources to patients and providers.

Methods

SCI professionals shared clinical experience and information, critically reviewed and determined best resources, and, in turn, formed a consensus for best practices for SCI care. Resource review included recommendations from participating centers, national and international websites and publications. Selection criteria for resource inclusion included: information that was professional and clinically up-to-date, easily accessible, and comprehensive yet concise.

Results

We developed seven minimum care standards: patient/family/caregiver education; autonomic dysreflexia; skin care; bladder management; neurogenic bowels; sexual health and fertility; and spasticity. Based on consensus, each standard lists the disciplines to be involved, the process for care delivery, recommended resources, and how to measure NESCIT’s effectiveness. Each participating facility committed to a representative “champion” to provide clinical consultation support to external clinicians, centers, and patients seeking information on SCI care.

Conclusion

NESCIT offers an innovative tool with clinical support to expand the capacity of any hospital staff, skilled nursing facility (SNF), home health care agency, and caregiver to treat SCI patients. It is currently being piloted with SNFs throughout New England via multiple channels.
New England Spinal Cord Injury Toolkit Offers an Easy to Access and Use Education Tool to Any SCI Caregiver

Objective

The New England Regional SCI Center facilitated development of the New England SCI Toolkit (NESCIT), a collaboration among New England medical centers that provide SCI care, with the goal of standardizing care throughout the region. Primary objectives are to:

- improve functional outcomes
- decrease the frequency of complications
- provide educational resources to patients and providers.

The developed "Toolkit" is described as a resource for building capacity at facilities that may not treat patients with SCI often enough to have developed expertise.

Problem Statement

Once discharged to a post-acute care setting, people with SCI are often at greater risk for developing secondary complications than they were when admitted to the acute care rehabilitation setting. Although the patient may be able to direct their own care, the staff at the new facility may not be familiar with the care of people with SCI treatment.

Methods

SCI clinicians across multiple disciplines shared clinical experience and information, critically reviewed and determined best resources, and, in turn, formed a consensus for best practices for SCI care. The topics covered are: Patient/Family/Caregiver Education; Autonomic Dysreflexia; Skin Care; Bladder Management; Neurogenic Bowels; Sexual Health and Fertility; and Spasticity. We shared NESCIT with staff at each participating facility. Each facility identified a representative “champion” to provide clinical consultation support as needed to external clinicians, centers, and patients seeking information on SCI care.

Results

The Toolkit resources provide SCI care information that is professional, clinically up-to-date, easily accessible, comprehensive, and concise. The champions can provide personal support and blend their experience with the resources to provide a targeted support package to fit a patient’s and/or institution’s specific needs.

Significance

- The Toolkit allows clinicians and caregivers to share and disseminate SCI care information to healthcare providers across the continuum of care.
- Especially useful: to patients discharged to long-term care facilities lacking expertise in SCI.
- For those with older age at onset of injury.
- Clinicians and caregivers can quickly become accurately educated to the specific needs of their patients.
- The portability of the online or print version allows for easy access in myriad of settings.

Conclusion

NESCIT offers an easy to access and useful educational tool with clinical support to improve the SCI knowledge of clinicians in hospitals, skilled nursing facilities, home health care agencies, and caregivers to treat SCI patients. It is currently being used in various settings by multiple disciplines.