OUTREACH CHLAMYDIA TESTING:
UPSKILLING A MULTIDISCIPLINARY WORKFORCE

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Background

Chlamydia is the most common notifiable Sexually Transmitted Infection in Australia with more than 80% of infections occurring in young people aged 29 years and under. Offering testing in an outreach setting is an effective strategy for engaging young people, reducing barriers to accessing services and reducing the number of undiagnosed infections. The National Sexually Transmissible Infection Strategy identifies Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and young people as priority populations. The aim of this project was to increase the opportunities for chlamydia testing in these populations by addressing structural barriers to service access. This was achieved by building the capacity of non-clinical sexual health and youth health service staff to offer information about and urine testing for chlamydia and gonorrhoea at targeted community events. Engaging the community in an outreach setting builds rapport with and youth health service staff to offer information about and urine testing for chlamydia and gonorrhoea at targeted community events. Engaging the community in an outreach setting builds rapport with

Model of Outreach Service Delivery

Pre-requisites
- Managers checklist to ensure completion of organisational occupational health and mandatory training requirements
- Includes: Category A staff vaccination, one day Child Protection Training, 7C’s of Chlamydia learning module

Outreach Screening Clinical Operations Manual
- Manual provides framework and resources, adapted from NSW Sexual Health Standard Operating Procedures Manual
- Includes: assessing suitability and safety of outreach testing locations, resources and equipment checklist, testing flow chart, client registration forms, risk assessment forms and referral numbers
- Outreach specimen collection checklist developed to address learning, literacy and numeracy needs of staff

Training - Outreach STI Testing
- Objectives: Provide overview of chlamydia and gonorrhoea transmission, testing and treatment, describe privacy, consent and infection control principles for outreach testing, Competency assessment for outreach testing
- Lesson plan, presentation by Sexual Health Clinical Nurse Consultant, Knowledge quiz
- Liaised with Local Health District Child Protection and Infection Control units

Competency Assessment
- Role-play scenarios (male and female clients) within the training session
- Competency assessment checklist: Interpersonal skills and risk assessment, specimen collection, transportation and storage and follow-up

Clinical governance and support
- RPA Sexual Health nursing unit review all medical records and provide results
- Ongoing clinical support provided by Clinical Nurse Consultant and Nursing Unit Manager

Evaluation Methods

Participants completed a pre and post training evaluation survey to measure self-reported knowledge and confidence in undertaking urine chlamydia and gonorrhoea testing in an outreach setting. The survey asked for responses to six statements on a scale of 1 (not at all) to 5 (completely). The average scores for each statement pre and post were calculated. Participants were also observed completing the skills of client registration, risk assessment, specimen collection, transportation and storage. All participants were successful in meeting the criteria in the competency assessment checklist following the role play scenarios.

Questions:
1. I understand how chlamydia and gonorrhoea can be transmitted and prevented
2. I will know if a client has given informed consent to have a test
3. I feel confident about asking clients questions about their sexual health
4. I am aware of how to ensure client privacy in an outreach setting
5. I understand the key issues for assessing a person under 16 years for risk of harm
6. I feel confident to use standard precautions when getting a urine specimen back from the client

Results

A total of nine staff completed the training between August 2014 and January 2015. The staff were from varying disciplines including Aboriginal Health Education Officers, Health Promotion Officers, Social Workers and a Nursing student. Eight pre and post surveys were completed. For all statements there was an increase in the average score in the post survey compared with the pre survey. The greatest differences were in the statements relating to assessing risk of harm in a young person and use of standard precautions.

Pre and post training knowledge and confidence

“the training made it easy to gain knowledge. I feel more confident to talk to young people about chlamydia and helping them to come to the clinic. At first I was nervous about doing the testing but with practice I keep getting better and better.” – Damien House, Aboriginal Health Education Officer

References:

Conclusion

Participation in the comprehensive training demonstrated an increase in knowledge, confidence and skills of non-clinical health workers to undertake urine chlamydia and gonorrhoea testing in an outreach setting. The training and ongoing support has further enhanced a strong collaboration between the sexual health service clinical and non-clinical teams.

*NAAT multiplex chlamydia and gonorrhoea