

Evidence-based practice translation project in a paediatric emergency department: Antipyretic interventions for children with fever

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Background:

Fever is frequently seen as the primary indicator of illness in children and is the leading reason for presentation to primary care facilities. Benefits of fever are well documented within the literature and best practice guidelines promote the administration of antipyretics only as clinically indicated. The routine use of antipyretics solely to reduce fever is not supported. Further research has shown that currently nursing management of children with fevers is inconsistent, ritualist and belief focussed.

Methods:

An evidence-based translation project, using audit and feedback, was designed to examine the extent to which practice achieved evidence-based recommendations for the nursing management of children with fever. The evidence-based audit criteria were extracted from systematic reviews and guidelines on paediatric fever management. A baseline audit was conducted to identify current practice, results were analysed and strategies were developed. A post-implementation audit was carried out following the implementation of strategies to improve practice.

Results:

Improvements in practice were evident following the second audit. This project has: increased knowledge of fever by healthcare staff and children's caregivers; increased consistency in the care of children with fever by healthcare staff which is now evidence-based; increased awareness by staff of the translation between theory and best practice and its utilisation at the bedside; identified limitations in current documentations within the emergency department.

Discussion:

This project has led to the development of evidence-based resources within the paediatric emergency department for medical and nursing staff as well as children's caregivers. During the project several barriers to the translation of evidence into practice were encountered. Further strategies were implemented to overcome these barriers. In addition, areas for further research have also been highlighted.

Key words

Evidence-based practice, fever, paediatrics, emergency healthcare settings, health education