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Role: Principal Orthotist

Institution: Aneurin Bevan University Health Board

RESEARCH STORY

Project Title: The Implementation of PAMs (Patient Activation Measure) into Orthotics Clinical Practice

Orthotic device abandonment is multifactorial and can not only impact a patient's psycho-social circumstances in the short or long-term, but it can also have a financial impact on the NHS leading to waste of resources.

Within Wales, we were given access to utilise the PAMs (patient activation measure) licensing agreement across some of the podiatry & orthotics health boards; inclusive of the health board I am employed at. PAM is a validated questionnaire designed to measure the knowledge, skills and confidence that a person has, to manage their own wellbeing. It assesses their current level and can assist in identifying areas to increase these levels and therefore aiming to improve treatment adherence. I felt following further investigation that PAMs may assist in empowering our patients to be in control of their health journey and play an active role in their own orthotic management which may influence device abandonment rate and reduce the financial impact it can have. The implementation of PAMs within orthotics would be in line with the All Wales Strategy and Action Plans and the Agenda for a Healthier Wales, which promotes the implementation of tools to assist patients to self-manage their own well-being.

Before introducing PAMs to the orthotics team, I started to implement it into my own clinical practice to identify ease of use, suitability within clinical time

frames and impact on patient treatment. I identified that PAMs not only impacted positively on patient care, but it also improved patient-clinician communication skills. I then asked my team to complete the training and to start utilising PAMs into their own clinical practice. The outcome and results may take several months and we are still in the process of gathering sufficient data.

The aims, implementation and impact of this project has assisted my team and myself to identify further quality improvement and service evaluation projects, inclusive of;

- Updating and refreshing our patient information leaflets which can assist in utilising PAMs and helps patients in understanding their condition and associated orthotic management better.
- The implementation of outcome measures to evaluate the effectiveness of orthotic treatment
- Review of the orthotic literature to assist in improving current pathways and guidelines

Furthermore, this project has helped us to grow stronger as an orthotics team. It assisted us to improve our own clinical practice, developing further research skills and improved our communications skills to effectively collaborate with other key stakeholders.

