

Enhancing Veteran Safety by Preventing Catheter-Associated Urinary Tract Infections

The Ann Arbor Patient Safety Center of Inquiry (PSCI)

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Funding:

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Length of Study:

2 years (possible extension pending)

Anticipated Impacts on Veterans Health:

Our specific goal is to enhance the safety of Veterans by promoting the safe and appropriate use of urinary catheters to prevent catheter-associated urinary tract infection.

Project Background:

Catheter-associated urinary tract infection, one of the most common healthcare-associated infections in the United States, leads to increased morbidity and costs. Given how frequently urinary catheters are used in Veterans Health Administration (VHA) hospitals and community living centers, Veterans are especially at risk for this common complication. Our Center is focusing on strategies and interventions – using the tools of implementation science – to prevent catheter-associated urinary tract infection in the acute care setting.

Project Objectives:

A major focus of our PSCI is providing tools and approaches that can be used for implementing changes related to urinary catheter use and catheter-associated urinary tract infection prevention within the VHA. Project 1 will produce a rigorously derived set of appropriate indications for when indwelling urinary catheters should be used in hospitalized patients. Currently, indications are based on expert opinion that have not been subjected to rigorous evaluation and have thus been variably applied in clinical practice. We are extremely fortunate that we have one of the developers of the RAND/UCLA Appropriateness Method – the internationally used approach that will be employed during Project 1 – as part of our PSCI. We anticipate that the list of criteria produced in Project 1 will be useful for both VHA and non-VHA hospitals as they address urinary catheter appropriateness. Project 2 is a mixed-methods study in which quantitative data – derived from a national survey of VHA hospitals – and qualitative assessments are being used to understand both “what” is occurring as well as “why” with respect to the use of urinary catheters and catheter-associated urinary tract infection prevention across VHA facilities. In addition, we are working closely with VISN 11 – a VISN that represents 7 acute care hospitals and 22 operating community-based outpatient clinics in Illinois, Indiana, Michigan and Ohio – with implementing and evaluating the catheter-associated urinary tract infection component of their “No Preventable Harms” Campaign.

Study Design:

For project 1, we are using the RAND/UCLA Appropriateness Method, which has been used to rate the appropriateness of more than 20 procedures in more than 10 countries. A comprehensive list of all the urinary catheter indications used in different studies and settings was compiled through a systematic literature review and served as a working document for the panel process. Project 2 includes a national survey of VHA hospitals to describe the diffusion, adoption, and implementation of CAUTI prevention practices as well as an in-depth qualitative assessment of the implementation of a CAUTI prevention program within VISN 11.

Potential Impact:

The strategies derived from this initiative will be used to develop and disseminate more effective approaches for catheter-associated urinary tract infection prevention throughout VHA. We hope to transform our ideas into action to improve the care that Veterans receive.

Partners: VHA Infectious Diseases National Program Office, Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) 11

