

Professor Eloise Carr¹, Dr Charles Campion-Smith¹, Professor Peter Wilcock¹, Professor Alan Breen², Louise Worswick¹

¹School of Health and Social Care, Bournemouth University

²Institute of Musculoskeletal Research and Clinical Implementation, Anglo-European College of Chiropractic, Bournemouth

Background

The high prevalence of back pain presents GPs with many management challenges. Despite clinical guidelines, care seldom reflects best evidence. We wanted to check if quality improvement methods coupled with interprofessional learning could help address this challenge and offer an opportunity to change practice and improve care.



Methods

Nine general practice teams, including service users, participated in eight half day workshops focussing on the principles and methods of improvement alongside learning about evidence based management for back pain.

Practices listened to patient stories, used quality improvement tools such as process mapping and the Improvement Model including Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) cycles to undertake small improvement projects between workshops supported by a Quality Improvement Facilitator within their Practice setting.



Results

21 PDSA cycles took place over twelve months including;

- improved evidence based information for patients,
- improved referral, reduced waiting times,
- promoting self care and
- consistency of advice from GPs.

Practitioners learnt to listen to patients and worked with them developing strategies for self management.



Sustainability

One year later, the interprofessional teams were managing back pain differently, they had sustained the improvements, applied learning to other clinical areas, continued to use improvement methods to change practice and to involve patients in their improvement work.

Implications

Evidence based care can be successfully introduced into practice using **interprofessional learning** as a vehicle for implementing improvements which can make big differences for patients and health care teams.

Key features for success include;

- patient involvement
- practice based support
- interprofessional learning
- using an evidence based approach to improvement.

This approach coupling subject knowledge and evidence with improvement knowledge offers important clues as to how to reduce the evidence-practice gap.

The LIMBIC project was funded by an award from the Health Foundation.

Ethics approval from Somerset NHS Research Ethics Committee reference 07/H0205/36 UK

Contact: lworswick@bournemouth.ac.uk
Website: www.limbic.org.uk
Illustrations: mdowling1@hotmail.co.uk