3242. Elimination of Reflexive C. difficile PCR Testing Among Inpatients Resulted in Cost Savings Without Adverse Events
Eva Sullivan, PharmD1; Rohit Majumdar, MD1; Courtney Ortiz, PharmD2; Patricia K. Riggs, DO1; Nancy Crum-Cianflone, MD, MPH1; Scripps Mercy Hospital, San Diego, California; Scripps Green Hospital, San Diego, California Session: 249. HAI: C. difficile - Diagnostic Stewardship Saturday, October 5, 2019: 12:15 PM

Background. Diagnosis of C. difficile infection is imperfect and various algorithms have been proposed. While PCR is sensitive for detecting toxin-carrying C. difficile, it leads to overdiagnoses resulting in antibiotic overuse and potentially unnecessary healthcare costs.

Methods. We performed a study of C. difficile cases after changing the testing protocol from reflexive vs. physician-ordered PCR in cases of indeterminate EIA testing (antigen +, toxin −). The study was conducted among inpatient adults at four large hospitals in the southern California area and evaluated two 6-month periods: pre-intervention (September 5, 2016–March 5, 2017) and post-intervention (3/6/2017–9/6/2017). Only the first C. difficile test during a period per patient was evaluated. Primary outcome was change in number of C. difficile diagnoses. Secondary outcomes included adverse events (missed cases of C. difficile and 30-day readmissions) and cost savings (accounting for PCR, incorporation, and treatment costs).

Results. A total of 500 EIA indeterminate C. difficile test results were evaluated, 281 pre- and 219 post-intervention. There were no statistically significant differences in demographics, laboratory values (WBC, Cr), or hospital site between the study periods. A PCR was performed in 99.6% (280/281; one not performed due to an inhibitor) and 66% (144/219) in the pre- vs. post-intervention periods (P < 0.01); the PCR was positive in 65% (n = 182 and n = 94, respectively) in both periods. The change in testing strategy resulted in a 49% reduction in PCR testing and 48% fewer C. difficile cases. There were no differences between study periods in 30-day readmissions for all cause (P = 0.96), GI-related illness (P = 0.93) or C. difficile (P = 0.47), nor in new or recurrent C. difficile cases (P > 0.99). No patient without a PCR and not treated was later diagnosed with C. difficile infection. Each reflexive PCR avoided led to a cost savings of $4,388/patient.

Conclusion. In our facility, inappropriate C. difficile testing testing was common and the accuracy of the medical record in documenting diarrhea was suboptimal. Education of patients and providers may be beneficial in improving the accuracy of diarrhea documentation and the appropriateness of testing.

Disclosures. All authors: No reported disclosures.

2344. Evaluation of a Best Practice Alert (BPA) to Reduce Inappropriate Testing for C. difficile Infection (CDI) Within a Multi-Hospital System
Ryan K. Dare, MD, MSc1; Claire E. Bewley, PharmD2; Amanda J. Novack, MD2; Jared M. Heiles, PharmD2; Larissa K. Chin, PharmD2; University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences, Little Rock, Arkansas; 2Baptist Health Medical Center, Little Rock, Arkansas
Session: 249. HAI: C. difficile - Diagnostic Stewardship Saturday, October 5, 2019: 12:15 PM

Background. Hospital-acquired CDI contribute to significant morbidity, mortality, and cost burden in hospitalized patients. Clinical practice guidelines recommend strict testing criteria when employing nucleic acid amplification testing alone as not to test asymptomatic carriers. A BPA within the electronic medical record (EMR) may assist with this screening.

Methods. At our 9-hospital system, we created a BPA to help identify patients who may not meet criteria for CDI testing. Initial BPA (January 2018) asked if patient had 3 or more stools (yes/no) and if laxatives were administered in the last 48 hours (yes/no). An expanded BPA was updated to pull medication administration records for use of laxatives in the prior 48 hours (August 2018) and notified providers of recent C. difficile testing in the past 7 days (January 2019). C. difficile orders from March 2017 (historical), March 2018 (intervention 1), and March 2019 (intervention 2) were evaluated to assess impact of these interventions.

Results. C. difficile testing occurred in 30,621 (historical), 31,299 (intervention 1), and 91,960 (intervention 2) patient-days were evaluated. Rates of C. difficile orders and infections are reported in the table. Ratio of positive C. difficile specimens to tested specimens were similar between the historical arm (51 of 402; 12.7%) and both intervention periods (42 of 271; 15.5%) and intervention 2 (45 of 316; 14.2%) arms (P = 0.3 and P = 0.5, respectively). Intervention 1 and intervention 2 arms were similar in all metrics. Statistical analysis was performed using Stata, v14.2.

Conclusion. Implementation of a decision support tool to assist with C. difficile testing significantly decreased order rates in both the initial and expanded BPA intervention arms. Compared with historical rates, incidence of CDI decreased in both intervention arms though these were not statistically significant. Similarly, ratio of positive specimens to specimens tested increased in both intervention arms, though not significant, indicating a trend toward improved patient selection. To improve appropriate CDI testing, further oversight and/or education is needed to accompany implementation of an EMR decision support tool, such as BPAs.

Disclosures. All authors: No reported disclosures.

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