

Quick Tips for Practice Reminders, Enablers or Practice Tools



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What are they for?

Definition: Practice reminders or enablers are tools that are designed to help practitioners initiate and maintain changes in practice. They are used in continuing education to help reinforce recommended practice behaviour thus expanding the impact of CHE efforts

What evidence do we have that they are helpful?

"Broadly defined CHE interventions using practice enabling or reinforcing strategies consistently improve physician performance and, in some cases, health care outcomes."

~ Davis DA et al 1992

In an article examining the results of 99 randomized control trial of CHE, Davis et al found:

- Educational interventions that incorporated "predisposing" factors such as knowledge testing and practice needs assessment strategies succeeded in improving some aspects of physician performance. Those interventions that did not use these strategies had less positive results.
- When "enabling" factors were added to the intervention such as practice protocols, algorithms, information from patients, and/or practice guidelines, the majority of the interventions were successful in changing performance.
- When "reinforcement" factors were added also such as reminders or feedback, effectiveness of the intervention also increased.
- Finally, the interventions that were most successful were those that used a combination of the three factors "predisposing", "enabling" and "reinforcing".

Examples of Practice Enablers and Reminders:

Examples of practice tools that contribute to using a new skill or approach introduced by a CHE event include such things as:

- Patient education materials
- Flow charts
- Decision aids such as algorithms
- Pocket card e.g. a card with the brand names of shoes suitable for diabetic patients.
- Reminder stickers for patient charts
- A pocket size card listing different types of anti biotics
- Handouts of key practice points
- Stickers to place on patient's files
- A list of conditions/symptoms to consider in making a referral
- A list of places or people to whom to refer
- Methods of tracking patients through electronic files

In addition:

In addition practice reminders and enablers can be helpful in sharing information with colleagues following a CHE event. These tools are particularly helpful in supporting systems change within group practices and inter-professional teams. Many of the examples listed above can be duplicated and shared, other examples include:

- PowerPoint presentations
- Relevant interactive web sites
- Presentations for grand rounds or workshops

Contacts:

Should you wish any further assistance or clarification, please do not hesitate to contact one of our Educational Consultants:

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Do you have examples, comments, information or references you would like to share and see added to CEPD Quick Tips? Please contact Jane Tipping or Kate Hodgson, Education Consultants with the Office of CEPD.

References

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