

WHANGANUI DHB STRIVES TO REDUCE SSI RISK AMONG PATIENTS

Implementing the national Surgical Site Infection Improvement (SSII) Programme has confirmed for Whanganui DHB (WDHB), that their orthopaedic patients are receiving best practice care for reducing SSI risk.

When the SSII Programme rolled out to DHBs in 2013, WDHB was already implementing many of the clinical practices recommended by the SSII Programme to reduce SSIs in orthopaedic surgery. This includes administering the right antibiotic prophylaxis at the right time and in the right dose, clipping not shaving, and using an appropriate alcohol-based skin preparation.

However, what did change for the DHB was becoming part of a national SSII Programme that has standardised the way that DHBs collect and report data about orthopaedic SSIs.

WDHB's SSII Programme coordinator Jacqueline Pennefather says implementing the national SSII Programme has been a team effort, drawing support from a wide range of disciplines.

Three WDHB staff, including Jacqueline and a clinical orthopaedic nurse specialist from the theatre team, attended the SSII Programme's roll-out training session. Here they learnt how to implement the SSII Programme and collect and report data.

After this, educating WDHB staff about the Programme and its requirements was central to ensuring smooth implementation.

"I met with all the theatre staff at their peer review meetings and I outlined the Programme and the criteria and the measures... along with what I needed them to do and why I needed to collect the data," says Jacqueline.

"With the support of a helpful clinical nurse manager that was just agreed to and flowed beautifully," she adds.

Jacqueline says engaging orthopaedic surgeons and anaesthetists was relatively easy. They were already aware of the SSII Programme and their clinical practice was changing to align with new research about preventing SSIs.

"I met with them and the head of department, who was more than happy with the data that was being collected and very supportive," says Jacqueline.

Support from WDHB's communications team helped to raise the profile and awareness of the SSII Programme among staff and patients, while the DHB's IT department assisted with data extraction and reporting needs.

"Everything was done really quickly without any fuss. It was just: 'Ok, that's what you need'," says Jacqueline.

"It has worked really well because of the committed management and head of department," she adds.

Providing plenty of positive reinforcement along the way was important to acknowledge the efforts of those involved.

SSII Programme progress is now discussed at infection control meetings and monthly theatre peer review meetings. Jacqueline believes the Programme has become business as usual.

"One of the positives is that it is a beautifully formalised approach and I get a fantastic report that is really easy to share with people," she explains.

"The SSII Programme was good validation that we are doing well," she adds.