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Adding value to Needle Free Devices with Total Solutions

Across healthcare COVID-19 has shone a light on many issues, not least how to train and educate healthcare workers quickly and effectively to use devices they aren't familiar with. As many clinicians, including operating theatres personnel were re-deployed to support colleagues in Intensive Care Units (ICUs) - and theatres converted to ICUs - reassigned staff needed to be able to access device training at a time when it was impossible for companies, like ours, to deliver training in the normal way. These issues were compounded further by a greater need for specific skilled procedures, such as IV access, and the use of associated equipment, including Needle Free Devices (NFDs), to treat seriously ill COVID patients.

We needed to support our customers in a different way, and fast! At its most simple we created 'points to practice' posters for our NFDs that could be laminated and put on the walls to act as reference guides. This experience reinforced our view, and vindicated the research we have been doing, about how we can add value to our partnership with individual trusts through remote support, training and education; at Total Solutions.

Increasing use NFDs

The use of NFD's is now commonplace across Europe as they support both the Safer Sharps legislation, in the delivery of IV therapy and contribute to the reduction of catheter related blood stream infection (CRBSi).

Our experience leads us to believe that their use will increase further still in the coming months. As the Northern Hemisphere moves into the flu season, hospitals are gearing up to manage both COVID-19 related admissions as well as seasonal respiratory illness. Patient management for this group will often include IV antibiotics over a five to ten-day period in both our adult and paediatric populations.

Depending upon the suitability of the infusate for peripheral drug administration and to maintain IV therapy over an extended period, vascular access teams are converting from repeated IV cannula placement, to either an extended dwell or PICC line catheter. Whilst this change has

the advantage of only requiring one device to complete therapy, our patient profile is prone to premature catheter occlusion. This is due primarily to a combination of coughing, that pulls blood into the catheter tip and or the effect of hypercoagulation associated with COVID-19.

To reduce the risk of peripheral catheter occlusion and thrombosis risk, best practice advice is to select a catheter with a diameter of <30% of the internal vessel lumen, which maximises peripheral blood flow. In addition, utilise a low cost 'keep open' device; such as bionector TKO, on every lumen. Used in exactly the same way as a classic neutral needle free connector (NFD), the integral valve closes automatically during coughing, preventing blood from entering the catheter lumen.

Which NFD?

With widespread use there are also a wide variety of NFDs to choose from. Are all NFD's equal? Is every device suitable for both adult and paediatrics? How does flow rate guide selection? Understanding the key features of each device will aid correct selection to meet both the patient profile as well as the infusion therapy requirements.

Taking a closer look at NFD clinical selection and use, we, in conjunction with our clinical partners and procurement teams, identified an inconsistency across training, education and user support, which ultimately resulted in premature catheter failure.

The Vygon Total Solutions project has evolved from this review and aims to reduce catheter complications and enhance the patient experience. To achieve this, we focus on three key areas:

Quality

Not just product quality and consistency but also help and resources, that comprise; clinical education programmes in line with; best practice, infection control and Aseptic Non Touch Technique (ANTT). This element promotes evidence-based practice for safe and improved clinical patient outcomes and audit tools to assist with surveillance and monitoring.

Support is customised to meet the needs of each hospital and Trust in line with current policies and procedures. Covering; infection prevention and reducing catheter occlusion.

In addition, and in response to COVID-19, we have worked with our partners to create educational posters and quick reference guides to support staff moving across departments, who may be unfamiliar with NFD use in a different clinical environment.

Clinical outcomes

The impact of training and education can be measured and analysed using our audit tools, which promote best practice and measure compliance. These can be used across departments to enable targeted follow up training, specific to each clinical area.

Partnership

Agreeing Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and deliverables as part of the contract term is key. A personal dashboard of activities is provided to enable a quick and simple analysis of performance against objectives. The dashboard highlights; training delivered, audits undertaken & results, clinical education and courses attended. Plus, any personalised educational documents created.

A transparent partnership

Our aim is transparency, as we believe this to be key to an effective partnership. Contractually we will share the responsibility of service delivery with our customers; monitoring, measuring and sharing user feedback and results. For example, with training it's not enough to say it is being done. There needs to be a record of what training it was, who attended and the outcome. That way we can show benefit and improvement so that the procurement team can truly evaluate the agreed KPIs. The same goes for a host of other benchmarks including deliveries and the resilience of the supply chain; another issue forced into the spotlight by the pandemic.

In summary we believe that NFDs can no longer be viewed in isolation and that to be truly effective we require additional support services that work alongside clinical teams. Vygon Total Solutions is a way to achieve your clinical goals with a robust measurement system that benefits both clinical and non clinical decision makers. ■

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TOTAL SOLUTIONS



Quality



Clinical
outcomes



Partnership

Total Solutions for needle-free devices delivers dedicated training and education programmes, combined with clinical tools, services and solutions which support your healthcare professionals, patients as well as your hospital. This is all available online to ensure you get the best support easily during the most challenging times.



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