How to scope, develop and publish an e-learning module

Annemarie Aburrow shares her experience of developing a new hydration e-learning module, from identification of the initial need to publication, and how this new training package is relevant for all healthcare professionals, including dietitians.

Dehydration

A key aim of Wessex AHSN is the spread of good practice and, as such, we do not have capacity to host the content and manage updates going forward. We therefore started conversations with HEI who agreed to host the e-learning. Once the content was ready (early 2020), it had to be tested on their system, and there were several IT issues and edin required to make it compatible. There were also other unforeseen tasks required, such as writing an accessibility statement, creating website copy and creating graphics, all of which took significant time. Unfortunately, the onset of Covid-19 also hampered the communication process, as we had to start working remotely. The e-learning was launched nationally in September 2020.

To get ready for publication, we also developed a communications plan, which included:

* Filming a professional promotional video
* Recording a Zoom meeting where members of the wider project team raised a mug/glass to say ‘cheers’ to celebrate the launch of the Hydration at Home Toolkit and e-learning module (with music to Beach Boys ‘Good Vibrations’ changed to ‘Good Hydration’)
* Creation of a Mailchimp newsletter, which was sent to 500+ Healthy Ageing team contacts
* Updating the Wessex AHSN website with all aspects of the Toolkit and links to the training
* Twitter campaign, during the launch week and also through Malnutrition Awareness Week, using #hydrationalert#great and #moneysaving

It’s for any care professional, including dietitians!

A poll taken during the Social Care Branch of the BDA’s webinar on hydration in October 2020 suggested significant gaps in knowledge on hydration in older people among dietitians.

* 43% of dietitians said they only consider hydration when giving nutritional advice (sometimes) or ‘rarely’
* 44% of dietitians said they thought the hydration needs of older people are ‘poorly’ or ‘very poorly’ considered/actioned in the care settings they work in
* 56% of dietitians said they use urine colour as an indicator of dehydration

In view of this, we would suggest that all dietitians also complete this e-learning module. You cannot rely just on one sign or symptom to tell someone is becoming dehydrated. Knowing what a person is usually like and seeing changes in them may indicate they are becoming dehydrated. The only way to tell for sure is through a blood test.

We are currently planning an evaluation into the impact of the e-learning six months post-launch. This will be done through surveys and telephone interviews. The Malnutrition Task Force has agreed to be responsible for the ongoing review and ownership of the e-learning.

For more information, the e-learning module forms part of the wider Hydration at Home Toolkit, which includes Hydration at Home Webcasts, Hydration at Home Toolkit and links to recommended hydration resources.

To get more information, go to: https://www.wessaaxon.org.uk/videos/show/362

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E-learning development

The initial idea

We identified the need for e-learning during our work with care homes and domiciliary care agencies. We provided face-to-face training, but wanted to work with care homes and domiciliary care agencies.

We approached 20 care home and domiciliary care agencies. They disliked e-learning that took longer than the mealtime assistant at an acute hospital) agreed to take part. Testing involved completion of a questionnaire before and after the training, and obtaining feedback and seeing changes in them may indicate they are becoming dehydrated. The only way to tell for sure is through a blood test.

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