Development and Dissemination of a Preconception Health Care Tool in Primary Care

Rebekah Barrett¹, Lena Salach¹, Amanda van Hal¹, Lindsay Bevan², Deanna Telner³
1. Regent Park Community Health Centre, Toronto, ON, 2. Centre for Effective Practice, Toronto, ON, 3. South East Toronto Family Health Team, Toronto, ON

Context & Objective
Good health begins even before conception. Recommendations from Ontario's No Time to Wait: The Healthy Kids Strategy suggest that optimizing patients' health before conceiving will improve their child's chances of choosing good health throughout their lives. In response to these recommendations, the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care engaged the Centre for Effective Practice (CEP) to develop and disseminate the Preconception Health Care Tool. The tool is designed to improve maternal and infant health outcomes in primary care by guiding providers' discussions of health promotion and illness prevention strategies with all patients of reproductive age.

Design
The tool was developed using CEP's tool development process.
- A working group comprised of a primary care nurse practitioner, a family physician, and CEP staff conducted a comprehensive search, review, and appraisal of existing clinical evidence. Through this process, the working group integrated all available evidence and resources into one tool.
- The tool was tested and refined based on feedback from individuals and organizations with expertise in maternal and infant care, and providers who practice comprehensive family medicine.
- By engaging target end-users and key stakeholders throughout the tool development process, CEP was able to better understand the individual needs and challenges faced by providers delivering preconception care, as well as gain insight on how to best address those needs and challenges in the tool.

Get Involved
CEP engages providers and stakeholders as often as possible in our tool development processes and related projects. If you would like to:
- Provide feedback on clinical tools
- Receive our newsletter
- Participate in Working Groups
- Learn more about our organization
Please visit www.effectivepractice.org and join the conversation.

Tool Highlights
Some key aspects of the tool include:
- It is available in both paper and web format;
- It contains links to current patient and provider resources throughout; with a focus on Canadian sources; and,
- The content will be kept up-to-date on an ongoing basis.

Results
The tool presents information for providers to use over a series of visits with their female and male patients of reproductive age to:
- Encourage patients to develop a reproductive life plan;
- Assess and optimize patients’ preconception physical and mental health;
- Optimize chronic medical conditions prior to conception;
- Choose safe medications for women who may become pregnant; and,
- Counsel on lifestyle habits (nutrition, physical activity, alcohol, tobacco and other substances).

Preconception Health Care Tool

www.effectivepractice.org/preconception

Contact Information
Lindsay Bevan, Project Coordinator
Centre for Effective Practice
647-260-7880
Lindsay.bevan@effectivepractice.org

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