Letter to the Editor

Simplifying outpatient antibiotic stewardship

Holly M. Frost MD1,2,3, Sonal S. Munsiff MD4, Yingbo Lou MSc5 and Timothy C. Jenkins MD6,7

1Department of Pediatrics, Denver Health Medical Center, Denver, Colorado, 2Office of Research, Denver Health Medical Center, Denver, Colorado, 3Department of Pediatrics, University of Colorado School of Medicine, Aurora, Colorado, 4Division of Infectious Diseases, Department of Medicine, University of Rochester School of Medicine and Dentistry, Rochester, New York, 5Ambulatory Care Services, Denver Health Medical Center, Denver, Colorado, 6Division of Infectious Diseases and Department of Medicine, Denver Health Medical Center, Denver, Colorado and 7Division of Infectious Diseases, Department of Medicine, University of Colorado School of Medicine, Aurora, Colorado

To the Editor—The overuse of antibiotics is a major public health crisis and results in increased antibiotic resistant organisms,1 adverse drug events,2,3 higher costs, risk for C. difficile infections4, and changes in the microbiome that place patients at risk for chronic diseases.5,6 In the United States, we have >2.8 million antibiotic resistant infections and ~35,000 deaths annually due to highly resistant bacteria.1

The majority of antibiotic use occurs in outpatient settings, and at least 30% of these antibiotics are not needed.7 Thus, programs to reduce outpatient prescribing are critical. In 2016 the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention published the Core Elements of Outpatient Antibiotic Stewardship.8 Tracking and reporting, also known as individualized provider audit and feedback, has been shown to be highly effective approaches to reduce unnecessary antibiotic prescribing. Unfortunately, while many of the elements are relatively easy for practices to implement, tracking and reporting has remained a major obstacle.

Since most practices now have electronic health records (EHR), the EHR should be leveraged to improve the efficiency of antibiotic stewardship programs. One challenge to the implementation of EHR-based tracking and reporting is many EHRs do not require antibiotic orders to be linked to an indication or diagnosis. Without knowing the indication, reducing the use of antibiotics for specific diagnoses cannot be tracked by programming alone. This situation is particularly problematic for phone-based prescribing or visits with multiple diagnoses since data would likely require manual abstraction. In our experience requiring providers to link an order with a diagnosis is simple to activate and requires only one additional click by the prescriber. This minor change can dramatically simplify data collection.

Furthermore, antibiotic prescribing feedback reports have to be prepared that are individualized and compare outcomes between providers and practices. Ongoing analyses of data are necessary to assess whether interventions are effective. A recent study of 8 community-based practices found that practices spent up to 20 hours per month preparing reports and nearly all used manual data abstraction.9 Acquiring data electronically was wrought with costs, time delays, and difficulty translating data into reports. Additionally, though many EHR systems have antibiotic stewardship platforms and the ability to create reports, EHR platforms can be time-consuming and expensive to build and modify, and often they are not flexible enough to meet the needs of specific projects. Finally, EHR stewardship tools typically are not able to provide information on which providers have reviewed reports.

Given these challenges, we developed a system called OASIS (Outpatient Automated Stewardship Information System) to help alleviate some of the barriers to tracking and reporting.10 OASIS uses common statistical software (SAS, SAS Institute, Cary, NC) to electronically abstract data from the EHR data warehouse, analyze, and report the data (Fig. 1). Because it uses common statistical software rather than an EHR platform, it is able to include and exclude subgroups of patients easily (eg, patients with a history of MRSA). OASIS is flexible, which permits more complex analyses if desired. Nearly any output format can be designed. It is also low-cost to set up and use. Importantly, it can be completely automated to generate and e-mail reports directly to stewards, providers, and administrators at prespecified intervals, thus obviating the need for manual data abstraction, development of feedback reports, and dissemination of the reports. Providers can review data on their mobile devices if desired and “read” receipts can be used to track who has read reports.

Importantly, because major EHRs store data in warehouses using standard formats and tables, the statistical code can be freely shared between organizations and utilized with only minor modifications. As an example, if stewards want to implement an intervention across many organizations to reduce antibiotic prescribing for bronchitis they can simply share the code with each organization.

We recently used OASIS as part of a bundled stewardship intervention to reduce unnecessarily long durations of antibiotics for uncomplicated acute otitis media (AOM) at Denver Health in Denver, Colorado (Supplementary Fig. 1 online). Uncomplicated AOM is a complex target from an EHR perspective because it includes multiple diagnostic codes, it requires exclusion of patients with complicated infections, and it requires obtaining duration of therapy from prescriptions for antibiotic suspensions. Because the reports were automated, our time to review monthly data was only a few minutes. The reports included clinic- and provider-level prescribing data in a bar graph format that included baseline prescribing from the prior year, year-to-date prescribing, and prescribing in the prior month. Provider names were included on reports to provide direct peer comparison. The bundled intervention, of
Association between extended-spectrum β-lactamase–producing Escherichia coli and oral third-generation cephalosporins

Hiroki Hosokawa BS1, Satoru Mitsuboshi PhD2, Hirokazu Isobe PhD3, Kenichi Kobayashi4, Hiroshi Moro MD, PhD5 and Toshiaki Kikuchi MD, PhD5

1Department of Pharmacy, Agano City Hospital, Niigata, Japan, 2Department of Pharmacy, Kaetsu Hospital, Niigata, Japan, 3Department of Pharmacy, Niigata University Medical and Dental Hospital, Niigata, Japan, 4Department of Pharmacy, Nagaoka Red Cross Hospital, Niigata, Japan, and 5Department of Respiratory Medicine and Infectious Disease, Niigata University Graduate School of Medical and Dental Sciences, Niigata, Japan

The content is solely the responsibility of the authors and does not necessarily represent the official views of the National Institutes of Health.

Conflicts of interest. The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

Note. OASIS® may be licensed at no cost by completing a web-based license or by contacting the lead author (Holly Frost) or coauthors.

References


To the Editor—The prevalence of extended-spectrum β-lactamase (ESBL)–producing Escherichia coli is increasing worldwide, and infectious disease caused by ESBL-producing E. coli is associated with increased hospitalization and mortality rates. The high consumption of broad-spectrum oral antibiotics is a serious issue because it likely increases the prevalence of ESBL-producing E. coli. However, in Japan, these oral antibiotics, which include...

Fig. 1. The OASIS® method for automating the creation of individualized provider antibiotic prescribing reports with peer comparison.

SAS® Statistical Software Code

- Abstract Data
- Analyze Data
- Create Reports
- Email Reports

Automated to update & repeat at pre-determined intervals

Electronic Health Record Data Warehouse

which OASIS®-generated reports were a major component, reduced unnecessarily long durations of antibiotics for uncomplicated AOM by 76% in 6 months. We expect that minimal data analyst time would be needed to modify the code to mimic the project at another organization.

Given the simplicity and flexibility of this approach, we encourage other organizations to utilize this method. The small amount of time and small financial investment at the beginning of the intervention was overwhelmingly justified by the reduced time and cost over the life of the project. We plan to collaborate with the University of Rochester to make minor modifications to the OASIS© for their antibiotic stewardship needs. In conclusion, OASIS© is a potentially important tool for streamlining tracking and reporting. Organizations should consider adopting OASIS© as a means to improve efficiency of outpatient antibiotic stewardship.

Supplementary material. To view supplementary material for this article, please visit https://doi.org/10.1017/ice.2020.1409

Financial support. Support for OASIS® was provided by the Denver Health Office of Research Pilot Grant Program. H.F. received salary support from the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health & Human Development of the National Institutes of Health (grant no. K23HD099925).