BIDMC Inpatient Hypoglycemia Protocol

The Problem

Hypoglycemia is a common and dangerous complication of insulin therapy and oral hypoglycemic medications. More than 50% of our patients receive pharmacologic treatment for diabetes, and are therefore at risk of hypoglycemia on a daily basis. Our approach to managing acute hypoglycemia was variable and inconsistent, and our assessment of best practices within the literature along with collaboration with the Joslin Diabetes Center demonstrated that we could do better.

Aim/Goal

Standardize the treatment of hypoglycemia to improve patient safety and effeciency of care.

The Team

Kathy Cunningham-Pharmacy

David Feinbloom-Hospitalist Medicine

Kerry Carnevale, Linda Denekamp, Kim Sulmonte, Jaime Lavash-Nursing

Jean Hurley-Information Systems

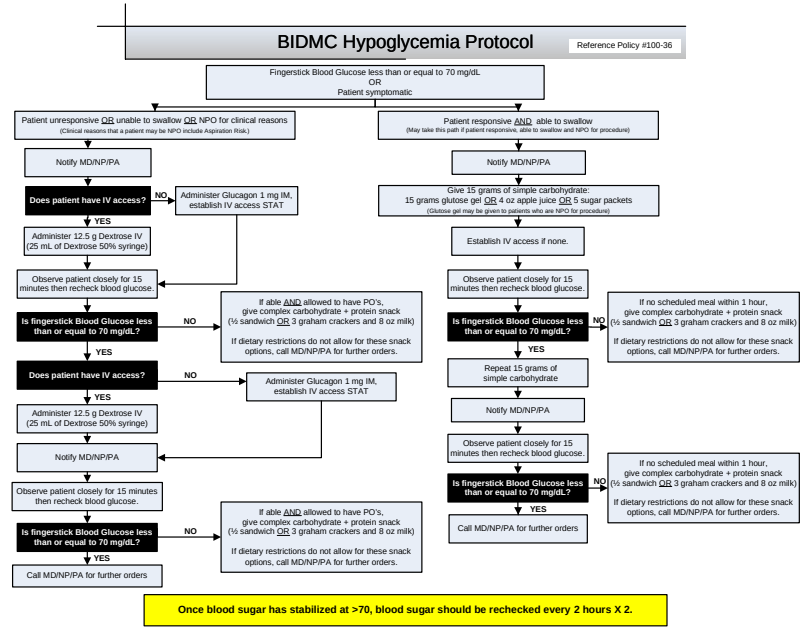
Patricia Samour-Nutrition

Bill Pyne-Distribution

The Interventions

- **Standardized:**
  - Glucose level at which protocol is initated
  - Provider notification
  - Treatment options based on patient condition whether to treat PO, IM or IV
  - Ongoing patient assessment during hypoglycemic episode
  - Post-treatment assessment
- **Implemented:**
  - Automatic generation of PRN dextrose and glucagon medication orders in POE when insulin or oral hypoglyecmics are ordered
  - Glutose gel made availabe on all units
  - Revision to printed insulin orders to include when to initiate protocol
  - Developed Nursing Policy #100-36 Hypoglycemia Management

The Results/Progress to Date



Lessons Learned

- Multidisciplinary collaboration is imperative to a successful implementation of practice change
- Communication and Education are essential components of a successful practice change
- Protocol empowers nurses to provide care in a rapid and standardized manner

Next Steps/What Should Happen Next:

- Evaluate use of glucagon and IV dextrose
- Evaluate ways to prevent hypoglycemia in the inpatient setting

Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center | A teaching hospital of Harvard Medical School | The Silverman Institute For Healthcare Quality and Safety

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