



# CASE STUDY

## Influencing Change



CLINICAL AUDIT AWARENESS WEEK, 24-28 June 2024  
Featuring the Clinical Audit Heroes Awards

[www.hqip.org.uk](http://www.hqip.org.uk)

### WINNER: Diabetic Foot Infection Team, Ashford and St Peter's Hospitals



### Improving Diabetic Foot Infection Outcomes

This project began with a retrospective analysis of diabetic foot infection patients attending the Outpatient Parenteral Antibiotic Therapy (OPAT) service for IV antibiotics. The team compared their infection outcomes and OPAT service outcomes with the national benchmarks (BSAC National Outcomes Registry for OPAT, 2015-2019) and found that they were lagging behind national figures, with an over-reliance on IV antibiotics that did not produce satisfactory results.

#### Project aims

The main aim was to enhance outcomes for Diabetic Foot Infection patients by achieving more healed ulcers, reducing or defining the duration of IV antibiotics, and facilitating an early switch from IV to oral antibiotics and streamlining pathways for patient care in all three keys areas of inpatient, outpatient and community settings. Additional goals included increasing the frequency of debridement, ensuring early specialist review, and providing regular post-discharge follow-up care.

*“If we counteract action inhibitors such as fear, inertia, and self-doubt with action motivators such as hope, urgency, and solidarity...we can bring about significant change that transforms patient care.”*

Diabetic Foot Infection Team

#### Methodology

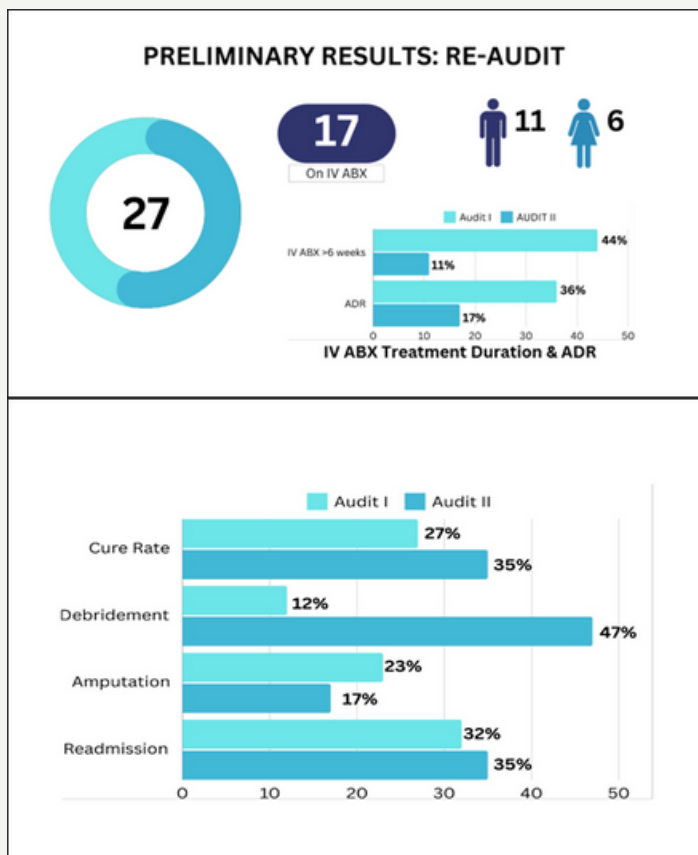
A multidisciplinary Diabetic Foot Infection meeting was convened to address the above issues, resulting in streamlined inpatient and outpatient treatment guidelines and referral pathways. Initiatives introduced included strict IV antibiotic criteria, early transition to oral therapy, early cessation of antibiotics, and prompt review by endocrine and surgical (Vascular/Trauma & Orthopaedics) clinicians. Additionally, a pilot Diabetic Foot Clinic was launched for early post-discharge follow-up in conjunction with novel treatments such as Stimulan®, topical antibiotic beads.

## How was change achieved in practice?

There was ambiguity in the admission and referral criteria for these patients, with them often being shifted between departments. Therefore, the clerking process was standardised, developing a template for comprehensive assessment of DFI patients as well as clear guidelines for urgent referrals, admission and post discharge follow-up in the hospital's pilot Willow Day Clinic.

## Evidence of improvement

Twenty-seven patients have been reviewed since the advent of the WD clinic, with a prospective study on these patients - to compare their outcomes with the first audit cycle – currently in progress. This will inform management and further changes in pathway/ treatment guidelines. See below, details of the preliminary results:



With thanks to the team:

- Junior Clinical Leads (Junior Doctors) – Dr. Kanupriya Bajaj, Dr. Marisha Sharma, Dr. Abdulahi Aden, Ms. Kate Eleftheriadou.
- Supervisors – Dr. Gautam Das (Consultant Diabetologist), Mr. Ashwin Unnithan (Consultant Orthopaedician), Ms Sally Greensmith (Quality Improvement Lead), Ms Catherine Parsons (IV Specialist Nurse), Ms Lyndsey Ritchie (Podiatrist).

The first audit cycle has been published in The Physician journal:

[www.physicianjournal.net/index.php/phy/article/view/194/256](http://www.physicianjournal.net/index.php/phy/article/view/194/256) (National MERIT Conference 2024, Manchester, UK).

## Clinical Audit Heroes Awards

part of  
Clinical Audit Awareness Week

## Influencing Change

The Clinical Audit Heroes Awards are the highlight of Clinical Audit Awareness Week. They recognise, share and learn from evidence-based quality improvement projects, including audits, which in turn, improve the quality of health and care services for patients and other service users.

Influencing Change is one of five categories in 2024 awards, and recognises projects that demonstrate evidence of translating data and evidence into meaningful change in practice.

More information about the 2024 award winners: Clinical Audit Heroes Awards.

In collaboration with:

