Acute Otitis Media: Discussion Guide 

During a regularly scheduled staff meeting, the stewardship leader(s) should ask all clinical staff which of the components of the AHRQ Toolkit To Improve Antibiotic Use in Ambulatory Care related to acute otitis media (AOM) have been reviewed. It is recommended that all clinical staff review at least one of the following: the audio presentation, the slide set with accompanying facilitator guide, or the clinician one-page document. Remind staff that even if they have not had a chance to review the material, that they should still do so. Also, remind staff how they can access the AHRQ Toolkit To Improve Antibiotic Use in Ambulatory Care content.

During the same meeting the stewardship leader(s) should generate conversation among staff members to determine how the practice can collectively improve the diagnosis and management of acute otitis media in their patients. Consider taking minutes and distributing them after the meeting to remind everyone present (and those not present) what was decided. Finally, it is also recommended to discuss progress on implementation of previous stewardship activities that the group is engaging in.

Suggested questions include the following:

1. How is the practice currently deciding which children with acute otitis media to treat with antibiotics versus which children to consider for watchful waiting? What guidelines/educational tools is the practice currently using to address the length of antibiotic treatment to prescribe?
2. What measures will the practice use to guide decision making for observation without antibiotic therapy for children with acute otitis media? What anticipatory guidance will the practice use for patients who will not be started on antibiotics initially?
3. What criteria will the practice use to determine when to refer patients to pediatric ear, nose, and throat clinicians (otolaryngology) for children with recurrent ear infections or chronic otitis media with effusion?

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