

Ensuring Patient Safety through improved Hospital Administration

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Abstract: The occurrence of adverse events due to unsafe care is likely one of the 10 leading causes of death and disability in the world (1). In high-income countries, it is estimated that one in every 10 patients is harmed while receiving hospital care (2). The harm can be caused by a range of adverse events, with nearly 50% of them being preventable (3). Each year, 134 million adverse events occur in hospitals in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), due to unsafe care, resulting in 2.6 million deaths (4). Another study has estimated that around two-thirds of all adverse events resulting from unsafe care, and the years lost to disability and death (known as disability adjusted life years, or DALYs) occur in LMICs (5). Globally, as many as 4 in 10 patients are harmed in primary and outpatient health care. Up to 80% of harm is preventable. The most detrimental errors are related to diagnosis, prescription and the use of medicines (6). In OECD countries, 15% of total hospital activity and expenditure is a direct result of adverse events (2).

Keywords- healthcare; patients; delivery; medicines

INTRODUCTION

It is progressively recognized that poor communication is a major factor in health care errors and remains a serious challenge to overcome in health care. With the lack of interprofessional communication between physicians and nurses, shortage of patient-staff interaction, and deficiency of effective nurse handovers, it is a major risk point leading to poor patient experience and having an effect on both patient safety and clinical outcomes.(7) Studies conducted during the past 3 decades confirm that the clinician's ability to explain, listen, and empathize can have an overpowering effect on patient satisfaction and experience of care.(8) As many hospitals may report, the rising importance of patient satisfaction and Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (HCAHPS) scores required by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services are causing a shift in how hospitals evaluate and manage their health care organization. It is time for hospitals to focus on employee engagement to enhance communication in which will, in turn, improve patient safety and experience, boosting the bottom line. With the amount of patient and clinician dissatisfaction and poor patient outcomes, addressing the issue of how to improve communication is of the utmost importance.(8) Because patient care often suffers when health care providers do not communicate efficiently and effectively, health care leaders need to discover ways to enhance communication to decrease the risk of sentinel events and to improve the overall patient experience. This article will identify and discuss different communication protocols that can be used to enhance the consistency of more efficient and effective communication within a health care organization to overall improve patient care and patient satisfaction(9).

SITUATION-BACKGROUND-ASSESSMENT-RECOMMENDATION

The information collected and observed consisted of report times, report consistency, quality of information, the use of paper handling, transcription times, and patient review times. The authors stated that the amount of time to complete shift reports before using the SBAR framework was approximately 53 minutes. After a total of 51 shift reports were recorded using the protocol, the authors noted that SBAR decreased the amount of time to complete shift reports down to 41 minutes using paper SBAR and approximately 38 minutes when using electronic SBAR. When applying the SBAR technique to interdisciplinary rounds, the authors observed that of the 269 patient reviews recorded it decreased patient review times from 119 seconds to 58 seconds. Because of this study, the authors noted that when the SBAR protocol is used it enables a focused way to set expectations for nurses and physicians to communicate the condition of a patient's health and have more consistent shift reports across the board. The SBAR protocol has shown to also decrease patient review times and allow for new nurses to perform more proficiently like well-experienced

nurses. The SBAR technique overall has shown to provide a successful framework for communication and has enhanced nurse-nurse communication and reduced the time spent on nurse shift reports and staff rounds.(10)

ONLINE VIRTUAL CLINICAL SIMULATION

The use of an online virtual clinical simulation, CliniSpace, was evaluated for the effectiveness of enhancing communication skills of baccalaureate nursing students. Because medication errors and sentinel events have been connected to miscommunication, it was decided to conduct this study to reveal whether the online virtual clinical simulation is an effective way to improve communication. The simulation identified substantial patient data and used the implementation of the identify, situation, background, assessment, and recommendation communication tool.

Students performed in two simulations that were scored by the CliniSpace identify, situation, background, assessment, and recommendation rating sheet. The authors stated that "student performance scores more than doubled from performance one to performance two."(11) The results of this study showed that the students felt less anxiety and had a better understanding of how to assess a patient and how to communicate more effectively.

ACKNOWLEDGE-INTRODUCE-DURATION-EXPLAIN-THANK

As previously discussed, patient satisfaction is becoming a huge factor for how health care leaders manage and run their health care organizations, because it affects the patient experience and may have an effect on reimbursement rates. Research has suggested the implementation of the acknowledge-introduce-duration-explain-thank (AIDET) protocol. The AIDET is a framework tool to enhance communication among patients, families, and medical staff. Sandlin et al observed the effectiveness of integrating the 5-step communication tool into perioperative areas of a health care organization through a program called "Partner in Care." The results of this program revealed that by applying AIDET as a framework to enhance communication "promotes safety, quality outcomes, reduces patient and family anxiety, and increases patient satisfaction."(13)

BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

The authors conducted a cross-sectional study and used questionnaires that aimed to detect significant aspects of communication among patients and their physicians. Among the 764 patients and 327 physicians, "35.1% of patients preferred to have the last word in clinical decisions" instead of allowing the physician to give their final decision. Certain factors, such as patient age and severity of the diagnosis, increased the likelihood of the patient taking a less active role in the decision-making process. Approximately 85% of patients stated that the amount of information that they received during the decision-making process was appropriate to make their own decisions in terms of their health. Among the physicians, approximately 20% reported that they felt the

need to interfere when allowing the patient to make their own clinical choices. Patients who are older or have more severe ailments typically chose to allow the physicians to make the final clinical decision. Physicians tend to refrain from reporting all possible complications from a medicine or an interaction between medicines to the patient. Because of this, the authors noted that the patients do not always feel adequately informed or involved in terms of their own clinical safety. (14)

IMPROVING COMMUNICATION THROUGH

Communication is pivotal to health care outcomes, which includes patient safety and patient satisfaction. According to Hegan,¹² “Communication reduces the chances of a breakdown in continuity of care, builds relationships and understanding. The majority of negligence cases are not related to the clinical quality of care but are triggered by an inadequate communication.”¹⁵

The final step is to thank the patient for choosing their health care facility as their health care provider and summarize the patient’s visit (thank). After patients are discharged from a hospital, they may be asked to complete an HCAHPS survey. This is an important factor when measuring the performance of the health care organization. The HCAHPS survey is “a survey instrument and data collection methodology for measuring patients’ perceptions of their hospital experience.”¹⁴

CONCLUSION

Patient care often suffers when health care providers poorly communicate between each other and their patients. Addressing the concern for how health care leaders can enhance communication in a health care organization can be solved by implementing two important techniques such as SBAR and AIDET as well as additional staff training and educational programs. It is crucial for health care professionals to be able to communicate efficiently and effectively among one another because this affects patient safety and patient outcomes. By using the SBAR and AIDET communication framework, it will improve the consistency of communication among the medical staff as well as enhance communication and listening skills between health care providers and their patients. By striving to provide more effective communication in a health care organization, it will strengthen and improve patient safety and maximize patient satisfaction..

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