Can seamless perioperative clinical handover reduce patient's anxiety?
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Introduction
Anxiety affects patients’ perception of the quality of medical care received. Anxiety is closely linked to satisfaction and for each 1% drop in satisfaction scores there is a 5% increase in risk management episodes. (Stelfox et al, 2005) Several studies have shown the beneficial effects of providing perioperative information to patients and their relatives. (Yazile, 2012).

Objectives
To reduce patient anxiety and to improve satisfaction by introducing a patient education program.

Methodology
A working group consisting of operating theatre nurses, ward nurses and surgeon, designed a preoperative education program aimed at reducing anxiety. Patients undergoing elective surgery were recruited from the Neurosurgical ward. These patients were scheduled for ultra-major operations and are known to experience high levels of anxiety. A preoperative visit was conducted using the AIDET Communication Framework, which has previously been shown to be an effective tool in improving patient satisfaction. (Studer, 2010). A modified STAI scale was then used to assess patient anxiety before and after the educational program. A clinical handover form was also introduced to help enhance communication between ward and theatre staff.

Result
After a one-month trial of the preoperative education program in 12 patients, anxiety levels of the patients according to the modified STAI scale decreased from 8.7 to 4.9. A paired t-test was suggested, the result is significant as p value is 0.007. (p <= 0.05) All patients expressed satisfaction with the program. We also collected staff feedback where 67% agreed that the clinical handover form enhanced communication between ward and theatre staff. Conclusion This newly designed program helps relieve anxiety and improves satisfaction of patients. A further two-month trial is now in place, which also aims at involving more nurses in the program.