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App-based Food Delivery in ICU - Happy Staff, Safe Patients

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Introduction

The clinical condition in critically ill patients can change rapidly in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU). There is increasing demand for food delivery service which not only saves the hassles from visiting the crowded hospital canteen but also allows prompt attention to patients in case of clinical emergency. The recent surge in the mobile application ("App") has promoted the food ordering practice in the ICU since July 2017. Medical staff ranking from houseman to Chief of Service are able to have meal inside the ICU together.

Objectives

To evaluate medical staff's perception on the use of App-based food delivery compared with meals in hospital canteen, in terms of (1) food variety and quality, (2) flexibility and convenience for lunch, (3) staff satisfaction and interpersonal relationship, and (4) patient safety.

Methodology

Subjects were medical staff working in the ICU from July 2017 to December 2017. Their perception of App-based food delivery and meal service from hospital canteen were measured by a questionnaire with Likert item from 1 to 10, where 1 = worst and 10 = best. The results were analysed with Wilcoxon-Signed Ranks Test.

Result

Results:

There were 21 medical staff working in the ICU during the study period. The response rate was 90.9%. Comparing the App-based food delivery with meal service from hospital canteen, the median score for food quality was 9 vs. 5 ($p < 0.001$) and food variety 9 vs. 4 ($p < 0.001$). The App-based food delivery was associated with an increase in flexibility (8 vs. 6, $p = 0.021$) and convenience (9 vs. 7, $p = 0.002$), improved relationship among colleagues (9 vs. 6, $p < 0.001$) and improved quality of work life (9 vs. 4, $p < 0.001$). There was a significant increase in the median score for responsiveness to emergency situation (9 vs. 5, $p < 0.001$) and patient and ward safety

(9 vs. 5, $p < 0.001$).

Conclusions:

The App-based food delivery service was favoured by medical staff in terms of expanded food variety, food quality, increased flexibility and improved convenience. Staff satisfaction, interpersonal relationship and patient safety were enhanced.