Service Priorities and Programmes

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MATCH – An effective method to reduce the presence of mislabeled blood culture specimen

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Introduction

Blood culture is an important investigation that affects patient's diagnosis and subsequent treatment. Unlabelled blood culture specimen is a patient safety concern. Therefore, our hospital developed an innovative improvement strategy in an attempt to eliminate this problem.

Objectives

To reduce the presence of specimen labeling error, avoid delay in patient treatment, and unnecessary blood taking.

Methodology

All mislabeled/ unlabeled blood culture specimens were identified by our hospital laboratory and reported to the Advanced Incidents Reporting System (AIRS). We identified the root causes of the specimen labeling errors were: Not following procedure steps properly for checking patient identity, and blood culture taking. To tackle these problems, we advocated "MATCH" to all our interns, and doctors working in departments that do not have interns MATCH comprised: M – Match the patient identity; A – Attach patient's GCRS labels on the blood culture bottles; T – Take blood culture with aseptic technique; C – Check safety triangle (patient's wrist band, patient's GCRS labels on the blood culture bottles; and patient's specimen job sheet); H – Hand in the checked blood culture specimen with patient's specimen job sheet in a specimen bag.

Result

The number of registered blood culture investigations in year 2010, 2011, and 2012 were 26,547, 24,634, and 24,894 respectively. There were 15 mislabeled blood culture events in 2010, 21 in 2011. After using MATCH, the number of mislabeled blood culture events dropped abruptly to 5 in the first half of 2012 and 2 in the second

half of 2012. Conclusion “MATCH” was effective in reducing the blood culture specimen labeling error.