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Project title

Improving Patient Experience and Staff Workflow through HA Informed Consent Form (ICF) System

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Keyword(s)

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Introduction

Informed consent for medical treatment/procedure is part of quality care and also a legal requirement. Healthcare professionals are facing the challenges of rising public expectation, media interest, discrepancies between spoken Cantonese and written English, and changing professional expectations for clear explanation and documentation of rare but serious consequence risks and treatment options. Public hospitals are particularly pressured by busy clinical operations.

Objectives

Our primary objectives are improving patient experience and staff workflow through information technology (IT) facilitation. The HA Informed Consent Form (ICF) System was developed to enhance data quality and documentation of consent forms.

Methodology

There are three key success factors to the ICF System: user-friendly functionalities, good data and engaged users. With the kind sharing of NTWC, the ICF System could start from a well trialed IT prototype which provided a simple web-based interface to select information on doctor, procedure and language. Document integrity was safeguarded by a unique serial number on each page of consent form. Many clinical departments have their pre-printed consent forms and patient information leaflets. The ICF System provided an opportunity to align different datasets, specifically the procedure name, intended benefits, risks/complications and patient leaflets. Clinical Coordinating Committees/Central Committees (COC/CCs) were engaged to align the procedure data. Clusters have also reviewed their data sets. Staff engagement was done through set up of Working Group on Informed Consent with representatives from clusters and Head Office, and over 30 roadshows to COC/CCs and clusters.

Result

With the concerted efforts of related parties, HI/IT, COC/CCs, clusters/hospitals and Quality and Safety, the HA ICF System was launched in September 2015 and fully implemented by December. There were over 2,100 procedures in the dataset, of which 251 procedures were aligned by seven COCs across HA. After one month of full implementation, 99,537 consent forms have been generated, with over 80% in Chinese. Although detailed evaluations on System utilization and effectiveness are yet to come, many staff feedback that ICF System had improved the quality of informed consent form with more comprehensive, standardized and legible information, elimination of abbreviation and reducing handwriting time or omission. Doctors can focus on explaining the consent content and communicating with patients/families.