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Enhancement Program of Clinical Handover in a Medical Ward

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Introduction

Clinical handover is considered as an important source of gaining patient information for nurses. However, nurses would perform clinical handover based on their experience. There is no standardized format for clinical handover. It can be a risk for miscommunication and leads to the delay of diagnosis and treatment plans. Therefore, an enhancement program of clinical handover is conducted.

Objectives

An enhancement program of clinical handover is conducted since 2Q 2015, aiming to strengthen the skills of clinical handover for nurses.

Methodology

(1) Formulate the Clinical Handover Tool Literature search was performed and found that there were various modes of clinical handover such as ISBAR and SBAR. ICCCO approach was adopted and it consisted of five major categories: (a). Identification of the patient, (b). Clinical presentation, (c). Clinical status, (d). Care plan and (e). Care outcome. Some important information including diagnosis, past medical and drug allergy history and current isolation status were also listed into the tool. Moreover, some high risk items such as drains and medicated infusions were included. The patient's clinical condition was described into problems. In each problem, nurses would state the investigation results and the treatment plan. The outcome would also be addressed. Nurses should mention the discharge planning at the end of each clinical handover. (2) Organize educational talks at ward Two identical educational talks were given to nurses at ward. It aims to strengthen their clinical handover skills, arouse their awareness and the use of the clinical handover tool. The quality of clinical handover is also stressed. (3) Compare the time spent for clinical handover To compare the effectiveness of the enhancement program, the time spent for clinical handover from AM to PM shifts before and after the program were measured for comparisons.

Result

By introducing a clinical handover tool and two identical education talks to nurses, the average clinical handover period was reduced from 39.42 minutes to 26.17 minutes. Nurses expressed that the clinical handover tool is useful. It is able to facilitate the clinical handover efficiently and in a standardized format.