



Service Priorities and Programmes Electronic Presentations

Convention ID: 966

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Proactive Approach to Enhance Nurse-relative Relationship: A Bedside Communication Tool

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Keywords:

proactive approach
effective communication
nurse-relative relationship
Enhance efficiency
workflow improvement
workflow improvement

Introduction

Introduction: Under an infirmary care setting like Wong Chuk Hang Hospital (WCHH), ineffective communication between nurses and relatives causes frequent interruption to nurses especially during long visiting hours. This poses significant impact on patient safety and care continuity, and potentially contributes to medical errors. Time for relatives' repeated enquiry reflects the effectiveness of communication, which may indicate for improvement. Evidences show that proactive communication by nurses can avoid costly errors, save time and allow nurses to deliver quality care to patients. Thus, a workflow improvement project is launched to reduce enquiry time of relatives through proactive communication by a trial of providing bedside communication booklet in an infirmary ward of WCHH.

Objectives

Objective: To pilot test the effectiveness of bedside communication booklet in reducing enquiry time of relatives and the fidelity, acceptability and feasibility of its implementation.

Methodology

Methods: A lean six sigma DMAIC model was adopted and a one-group, pre-test, post-test pilot design (N=25) was done between November 2014 to January 2015. A bedside communication booklet was designed and distributed to bedside of each patient in the ward during visiting hours. Total enquiry time of all relatives was measured before and after the use of the bedside communication booklet. Change in time was tested with paired samples T-test.

Result

Results: With the use of the bedside communication booklet, enquiry time by relatives reduces from a mean of 15minutes to 8 minutes (-46%, p=0.003). Meanwhile, positive feedbacks are received from family care givers. **Conclusions:**

Implementation of bedside communication booklets is feasible in WCHH and has the potential to enhance communication between nurse and relatives and improve patient safety. Further review for the right timing of providing the booklet, frequency of updating the booklet and the enhanced approach are needed. Implication on service enhancement Effective communication is a critical component of high quality, safe care and essential for engaging relatives and healthcare providers. The proposed strategy of using patient-centered and proactive approach is integral to quality care of patients and can be utilized concomitantly in the entire healthcare settings. This can address to relatives' general concerns, alleviate their stress and reduce their care burden, which in turn, reduce interruptions to care procedures so that quality and safety of care delivery can be better assured.