

Implementation of a Standardized Handoff Checklist to be Used During Shift-to-Shift Report for Improvement of Nurse Communication and Continuum of Care for Patients on a P6 Cardiac Telemetry Floor

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Background

- A patient handoff is "the transfer and acceptance of responsibility for patient care that is achieved through effective communication." This occurs every 12 hours in the hospital setting when one shift of RNs leaves and another group of nurses has started working.
- Communication between nursing staff members is key to the continuity and safety of patient care delivery, however communication failures in patient handoff represent a common source of sentinel events.
- Communication errors (i.e. lack of pertinent information during report between day shift and night shift) were the primary cause of more than 60% of sentinel events analyzed by the Joint Commission in 2016.
- By implementing an effective handoff checklist for nurses to utilize while giving report during shift change, patient safety can be positively impacted, thus reducing many adverse outcomes in the hospital setting

Purpose of Study

To determine whether P6 Cardiac RNs would find a standardized checklist at handoff helpful for improving nurse communication and safety of patient care.

Methods

- Advertising – Flyers were placed throughout unit to draw the attention of RNs on P6 to participate in the study
- Education – Brochures were placed in RN mailboxes and in breakroom with info/statistics related to improved patient safety/employee satisfaction with report checklist. Educational content was also presented to RNs during May morning "huddles".
- Questionnaires were placed in RN mailboxes to gather their opinions.
- Checklists were created and distributed to RNs on P6.

Data Collection and Results

Standardized Handoff Checklist

- Code Status
- Reason for Admission
- Activity Limitations/Mobility Status
- IV Infusions/Line Reconciliation
- Infusion Compatibility
- Lines, Tubes, Drains
- Relevant / Critical Test Results
- Planned Testing
- Plan for Discharge
- Any abnormal assessment findings during previous shift
- Heparin Verification
- Room Safety (bed alarms, lines/tubes/drains, fall risk, bed locked and lowered, call bell within reach)
- Patient's orientation status (alert and oriented vs. confused) compared to their baseline

EMMC's P6 Cardiac RNs Responses

Results (n=20)

Highest Degree of Education	
Associates	35%
Bachelors	60%
Masters	5%
Years Working as a Registered Nurse	
0-1 year	45%
2-5 years	20%
5-10 years	10%
10+ years	25%
Years Being a Cardiac Registered Nurse at EMMC	
0-1 year	50%
2-5 years	20%
5-10 years	20%
10+ years	10%
Do You Believe a Standardized Report Handoff Would Increase Employee Satisfaction / Patient Safety with Shift to Shift Report?	
YES	95%
NO	5%
Have You Ever Used a Standardized Report Handoff in Your Practice as a Registered Nurse?	
YES	35%
NO	65%
Is a Standardized Report Handoff Something You Would Consider Implementing Into Your Daily Practice?	
YES	95%
NO	5%

Summary/Discussion

- This study was the first initiative in creating a patient hand-off tool to improve patient outcomes. It can be used on the cardiac telemetry unit but can be standardized for other medical-surgical units as well.
- The next steps in this study would be to implement the handoff checklist in all rooms on P6 Cardiac for RNs to utilize during report. Data would be gathered over a significant amount of time to assess for improvement in patient safety, satisfaction, length of hospital stay, etc.
- Positive feedback was gathered on the questionnaires and it is felt that the checklist would provide great outcomes for the staff and patients on P6 Cardiac.
- This tool would be beneficial for all RNs, but more specifically for new graduate RNs adapting from nursing school to career nursing.

Conclusions

- This study found that nurse-to-nurse communication during patient handoff at EMMC can be improved with a standardized report checklist and the RNs on P6 Cardiac agree with the usefulness of such a tool.
- A majority of P6 Cardiac RNs agree with the following benefits of a handoff checklist: improved patient and employee satisfaction, improved patient safety, decreased length of stay and treatment delays, and avoidance of hospital readmission.
- 95% of nurses (19/20) surveyed on P6 Cardiac strongly support a standardized handoff checklist and would be willing to assist in its implementation.

References

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