In Patients on a Medical-Surgical Floor, Does the Use of Personal Communication Devices Between Staff Versus Intercom Communication Improve Staff Communication and Workflow?

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Background

- Communication is a key component in the effectiveness of workflow in a health care setting
- Nurses have to constantly shift focus between tasks and the needs of their patients. Responding to patient's calls/requests is a big part of a nurse's work day
- Medical mistakes can be directly linked to miscommunication
- Wireless communication devices such as Vocera have been shown to significantly reduce patient response times
- Having an effective way to communicate on a nursing unit can improve workflow, patient response times, and staff satisfaction

Practice Change

- Implemented Vocera on the unit to improve workflow and communication amongst staff

Methods

- A pre-survey will be given to evaluate the current system of communication
- Staff was provided with Vocera devices for a full shift
- A post-survey was provided to staff to evaluate the new communication devices with targeted questions about how the devices affected workflow and communication

Measures and Results

Pre-Survey (n=18)

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Do you feel like the intercom system of communication is effective?	44%	39%	6%	11%	0%
Do you feel like there is room for improvement in communication between staff?	0%	0%	5%	28%	67%
Do you feel like your workflow has been negatively affected by the intercom system?	0%	5%	0%	17%	78%
Do you feel like there was ever a delay in response to a patient's needs due to the current staff communication system?	0%	6%	0%	6%	88%
Do you feel like you are able to meet the patient's needs in a timely manner?	39%	44%	6%	11%	0%

Post-Survey (n=9)

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Do you feel like the Vocera-based system of communication is effective?	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
Do you feel like there is still room for improvement in communication between staff?	0%	0%	11%	78%	11%
Do you feel like your workflow has been negatively affected by the Vocera system?	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Do you feel like there was ever a delay in response to a patient's needs due to the Vocera communication system?	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Do you feel like you were able to meet the patient's needs in a timely manner while using the Vocera communication system?	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%

Summary/Discussion

- Our results suggested that the staff we surveyed thought that the intercom system is an ineffective way of communicating and responding to patient needs in a timely manner. Our work also suggested that the staff we surveyed thought that the Vocera communication system was an effective way of communicating and also responding to patient needs in a timely manner.
  - Next Steps: Implement Vocera for all staff on the unit
- Feedback from staff:
  - "It's a great start, but would better for all staff to have it"
  - "It's nice to not have to track the nurse down to tell them something"

Conclusion

- When comparing the two communication systems, staff were significantly more satisfied with Vocera.
- All staff felt the Vocera was effective and that they were able to meet patient needs in a timely manner.
- According to the surveys, workflow was improved with Vocera
- There is still room for improvement with staff communication but could be attributed to the limitations of the project which are the length of study (1 week), number of Vocera units used (2 units), and number of people that were allowed in the system to use it.

References

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