Improving Nurse and Physician Communication

With the Use of a Standardized Discharge Checklist

Katie Wilson, BSN, RN, MSN Student

ANNIE TAYLOR DEE SCHOOL OF NURSING

WEBER STATE UNIVERSITY
Dumke College of Health Professions

BACKGROUND

Nurse and physician communication can directly affect patient outcomes in surgical healthcare(1). Delivering quality patient care requires reliable, effective, and efficient communication between nurses and physicians. Current evidence indicates that patients are more likely to be involved in their care when communication is simple, yet effective(4). With the use of standardized teach-back methods, patients are more encouraged to be involved in the discharge process after surgery. This project promotes improved communication and patient outcomes by standardizing the discharge process with the use of a checklist within surgical services.

PICO QUESTION

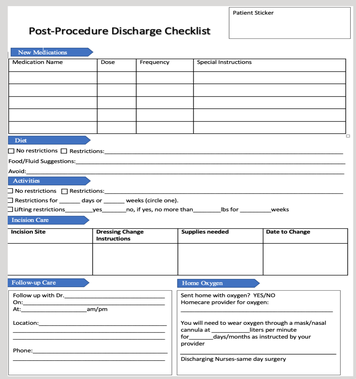
Does a post-operative checklist improve communication and decrease the events of missing discharge orders in surgical services?

METHODS

The intended recipients include perioperative surgical nurses who will use this standardized discharge checklist to ensure that all discharge orders are communicated before patients are sent home. A structured collection of post-operative discharge instructions via a discharge checklist is necessary to improve communication between pre-operative nurses and physicians.

The Ottawa Model of Research Use

- Ensures that the process is reproducible and transparent(2)
- Reduces barriers to project implementation
- Allows for the tailoring of implementation interventions(3)
- Unidirectional, with all elements influencing one another(2)



Post-Procedure Discharge Checklist

Patient Sticker

New Medications

Medication Name	Dose	Frequency	Special Instructions

Diet

☐ No restrictions ☐ Restrictions:_____

Food/Fluid Suggestions:_____

Avoid:_____

Activities

☐ No restrictions ☐ Restrictions:_____

☐ Restrictions for _____ days or _____ weeks (circle one).

☐ Lifting restrictions_____yes_____no, if yes, no more than_____lbs for _____weeks

Incision Care

Incision Site	Dressing Change Instructions	Supplies needed	Date to Change

Follow-up Care

Follow up with Dr._____
On:_____
At:_____am/pm

Location:_____
_____
_____
_____

Phone:_____
_____

Home Oxygen

Sent home with oxygen? YES/NO
Homecare provider for oxygen:
_____

You will need to wear oxygen through a mask/nasal cannula at _____liters per minute
for _____days/months as instructed by your provider
_____

Discharging Nurses-same day surgery

EVALUATION

Perioperative nurses will be essential in the evaluation of the effectiveness of the standardized discharge checklist. Additionally, unit leadership will look at adverse event reporting. The following items will be used for evaluation of the project.

- Post-implementation evaluation survey after one month of use
- Monthly staff meetings with providers and nursing staff
- Unit leadership evaluation of adverse event reporting following discharge and patient readmission rates

CONCLUSIONS

This project aims to improve poor communication between nurses and physicians with the use of a standardized discharge checklist in surgical services. An insufficient standardized discharge process is the leading cause of medical error and patient harm.

Lack of communication can lead to various adverse outcomes, including discontinuity of care, dissatisfied patients, compromise of patient safety, and economic consequences.

However, nurses in surgical services can influence patients' outcomes post-surgery by implementing a standardized discharge checklist. In addition, the quality of discharge education affects patients' participation in their care management post-discharge from the hospital.

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