A Unified Approach to Hand-Off Communication
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Problem:
Effective communication has been identified as a challenge when patient care, treatment or service responsibilities are transferred.

Evidence:
Hand-off communication refers to an effective process of passing patient information among caregivers for the purpose of ensuring the continuity and safety of the patient’s care.

Strategies:
- Development of a survey on hand-off communication practices.
- A handoff process algorithm.
- Power-point training
- Around the clock educational sessions

Practice Change:
Implementation of the S–BAR communication model.
S=Situation
B= Background
A=Assessment
R= Recommendations

Evaluations:
1 Relationship between communication among healthcare providers with the continuity of care.
2 Utilization of a hand off communication form and answering the S-BAR survey question.

Methodology:
A survey of 546 registered nurses completed. Data analyzed using Excel. The Fisher Exact test was applied to determine significance of units that utilized a hand off communication form and the likelihood of answering the S-BAR question correctly.

Results:
Fifty seven percent (310/546) of the survey responses were received. Findings were:
72 % received training; 91% were familiar with the hand off communication, 46% stated their unit had a hand off communication form, of which 84% used the form, 67% were familiar with the guidelines; and 76% felt that the information given during handoff was complete.
Recommendations:
1. A standardized, automated hand off communication form should be developed
2. Present findings to all nurses using various forums
3. Integrate discussion of hand off communication into Nursing Journal Club

Lessons Learned:
The respondents that had a hand off communication form were more likely to respond correctly to the question regarding S-BAR (p<0.0001). Responding correctly to the S-BAR question indicated staff’s knowledge of the Communication Model S-BAR. A unified approach to hand off communication enhances effective communication among health care providers.

Bibliography
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