Critical Value Reporting in the Inpatient Setting
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PROBLEM:
The Joint Commission (TJC) National Patient Safety Goal (NPSG) 2011 02.03.01 seeks to avoid unnecessary delay in treatment by reporting critical results of tests on a timely basis. Our hospital mandated a process to comply with the TJC NPSG. However, implementation within the nursing operational units either did not exist or was not standardized. In units that did collect data compliance was lacking.

EVIDENCE:
Available evidence indicates nursing services must collaborate with laboratory personnel and evaluate the timeliness of reporting the critical results of tests in the inpatient setting. Best practice dictates that reporting should be accomplished within 30 minutes.

STRATEGY:
A nursing compliance committee was formed to review the literature, collaborate with lab personnel, revise data collection, and create an educational tool for the nursing staff. Also, formal chart audits were initiated to assess documentation compliance.

PRACTICE CHANGE:
Prior to implementation, nursing staff was educated via PowerPoint presentation and hands-on training regarding new documentation processes and rationale of the proposed change. The committee chairman provided oversight by collecting weekly reports from unit monitors and submitting monthly reports to unit managers.

EVALUATION:
The following data were collected weekly: critical lab value, date and time lab called, data and time nurse notified the physician, and evidence of documentation. Data was reviewed and analyzed by the committee each week to look for improvement opportunities.

RESULTS:
Standardized nursing documentation among four units was accomplished, and nursing staff compliance increased dramatically; from 47% to 86%. There were more than 150 critical values reported. Average reporting time from the initial call by lab to provider alert was 10 minutes.
RECOMMENDATIONS:
Initially, submit weekly reports during the three month implementation phase. This ensures proper evaluation of nursing compliance and reinforces education on proper documentation.

LESSONS LEARNED:
Developing and implementing new processes and data collection tools to meet NPSGs is challenging. Recruiting responsible unit monitors who can provide leadership across four units promotes the implementation success.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:


