Improving Communication between Nurses and Hospitalist Physicians: The Case of St. Paul’s Hospital in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan—Canada
Ben Daniel, PhD
Izabela Szelest (Presenter)
Saskatoon Health Region
Charlene Magnus, Beth Horsburgh

Problem:
Ineffective communication between nursing staff and hospitalist physicians at St. Paul’s Hospital diminished providers’ satisfaction with the hospitalist program.

Evidence:
Formative evaluation of the program revealed interpersonal conflicts between nurses and hospitalist physicians, resulting in diminished program outcomes.

Strategy:
Following the evaluation, the hospitalist steering committee responsible for administering the program implemented strategies to improve communication.

Practice Change:
Collaborative discharge planning, shared standards of care, and interdisciplinary patient care rounds were three practice changes implemented.

Evaluation:
Communication indicators included: provider reward and recognition; autonomy and control; hospitalist response times; and satisfaction with relationships.

Results:
Implementation of the three practice changes resulted in measurable outcomes, including improved participation of hospitalists in interdisciplinary rounds and reduced delay in patient discharge.

Recommendations:
• Develop a less physician-driven environment by encouraging staff to work together in multidisciplinary services;
• Engage program leadership to set mutual goals, clarify roles and accountabilities;
• Establish a forum for nurses and hospitalists to discuss communication and develop action plans to address issues; for example, unanswered pages or instructions not followed; and
• Develop and use interdisciplinary patient communication forms to enhance communication during shift changes and hospitalist rotations (yet to be implemented).
Lessons Learned:
- Engaged interdisciplinary leadership is integral to ongoing quality improvement of hospitalist programs;
- With rising numbers of increasingly complex patients requiring hospitalist services, effective communication between nurses and hospitalists is increasingly vital to program outcomes; and
- A dedicated Research Office was integral to designing and implementing the ongoing evaluation of the SPH hospitalist program.

Bibliography:
