Academic Center for Evidence-Based Practice

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**Improving Patient Satisfaction Scores with a New Intermediate Care Unit (IMU) Language: An Evidence-Based Practice Project**

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**Problem:** Although nurses on an intermediate care unit (IMU) were being regularly informed of monthly patient satisfaction scores, an opportunity was identified to increase nurses’ knowledge regarding measures and results of the specific patient satisfaction tool used by the organization.

**Evidence:** Review of literature supported that satisfied patients can be easier and more rewarding to care for, require less healthcare provider time, and better adhere to their plan of care.

**Strategy:** An Evidence-Based Practice (EBP) workgroup conducted a project following the five steps of the EBP process: ASK, GATHER, APPRAISE, ACT and EVALUATE. Eight articles were appraised and best practice recommendations were identified. Data were gathered during the patient encounters and hourly rounding to assess patient’s perception of care, effectiveness of nurse communication, and perceived promptness of response to patients’ needs. An educational intervention was provided about the patient satisfaction tool used by the organization, including a review of the specific questions patients were asked and instrument scoring. An initial assessment of patient call light usage was conducted by workgroup members.

**Practice Change:** A new 3C IMU language incorporating satisfaction question key words was developed. A commitment letter regarding the new language and AIDET [Acknowledgment, Introduce, Duration, Explanation, Thank you] was signed by all staff agreeing to adopt the new language. Patient call light usage was monitored and results were shared weekly. Team members with the least call light usage were recognized.

**Evaluation:** Assessment of patient satisfaction scores and call light usage was conducted one month after the New Language implementation.

**Results:** Over a three month period, the unit’s patient satisfaction score increased from 37.5% to 76.5%. The volume of patient call-light usage decreased from average 40 to 50 calls per shift to 20-25 per shift.

**Recommendation:** Incorporating the New Language using patient satisfaction terminology and AIDET during nurse-patient interactions can improve patient satisfaction scores.

**Lessons Learned:** An evidence based practice approach provides an effective strategy to improve patient satisfaction scores.

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