Improving Communication in the Perioperative Waiting Area

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Abstract

Problem: lack of communication given to families or loved ones in the waiting area as evidenced by the OAS CAHPS scores.

Background: The operating room and PACU are not providing sufficient updates to the families due to lack of time and they often ask the receptionist for updates, who are not able to provide them. This leads to stress and anxiety for the family and ultimately a low satisfaction score.

Plan: A literature search was done for peer-reviewed, evidence-based research to improve communication in the way of updates, and the technology of secure text messaging programs was found. The plan was derived for the implementation of PatientTrak:

- cloud-based system, texts can be sent from any computer to any text-ready mobile phone
- There is no software to install
- The messages are pre-determined canned texts
- HIPPA compliant

The message can be sent in three simple “clicks”

Pre

Enhances privacy of clients and family members (Gordon et al., 2015). Multiple classes offered, different

Director of Perioperative Services (who is the writer’s

CEO of PatientTrak)

Standardized text messages

team decided on the canned texts and the OR

Updates when there is a change in the phase of care (moving from

A Physician Champion

Provides freedom to the family members waiting in the lobby

A member of the Legal Department

Identification of Risk Factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk Factors for Poor Communication in the Perioperative Setting</th>
<th>Patient Barriers</th>
<th>Nursing/Staff Barriers</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Crowded waiting areas</td>
<td>Workflow</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Impersonal approach to communication</td>
<td>Difficulty locating/contacting families</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Tracking boards do not update</td>
<td>Time</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Need for technology (smartphone or charger)</td>
<td>Cost</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Confidentiality/safety</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

These barriers were identified according to research of similar electronic messaging systems

Implementation

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<th>Overcoming Barriers</th>
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<td>Time for education</td>
<td>Multiple classes offered, different times and days</td>
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<tr>
<td>Go live-day-staff forgot passwords, &amp; organization rotate ID</td>
<td>“Cheat sheet” created with info, password requirements (ex. Special character)</td>
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<td>Buy-in from surgeons</td>
<td>Physician Champion-determined at OR Committee-asked for input on canned texts</td>
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Before

Nurses were asked to send messages at certain phases and time frames depending on the department (OR or PACU). These messages are HIPPA compliant and can also be received when the person is not on the premises because they are sent directly to their personal phone.

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After

Samples of Frequently Sent Text Messages After Implementation


References


Future Actions: The interprofessional team will continue to meet to discuss any concerns and determine if patient satisfaction scores continue to improve due to the implementation.

Best Practices

- Standardized text messages
- One-way messaging
- Updates every hour
- Updates when there is a change in the phase of care (moving from OR to PACU) (Wieck et al., 2017)
- HIPPA Compliance-the patient chooses only those he/she wants information disclosed to
- Enhances privacy of clients and family members (Gordon et al., 2015)