The Implementation of a Designated Alert Team to Improve Patient Safety and Nursing Staff Perceptions of Patient Safety

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**Background**

- Wellstar Kennestone Medical Center is the 5th busiest Emergency Department in the nation.
- 2017 Organizational Trust Action Survey results indicated that staff believed our department workload was intensely stressful leading to burnout and multiple staffing vacancies.
- Several nursing assignments required nurses who were working in a set of patient care rooms to simultaneously cover traumas, strokes, STEMIs and codes in another area of the department.
- Their existing patients were assumed to be cared for by other nurses in the area.

**Purpose**

To improve patient safety and nursing staff perception of patient safety by implementing a designated alert team rotation comprised of nurses who had no other patient care responsibilities to care for trauma, stroke and critically ill patients upon arrival to the ED.

**Design**

The Plan-Do-Study-Act model was used to guide this practice change

**Setting**

- Urban tertiary care regional teaching medical center with 633 inpatient beds.
- Level II trauma center with 140,000 annual visits.
- Approximately 300 registered nurses and technicians are employed in the department

**Participants**

- All registered nurses and technicians employed in the department
- Participation was voluntary and anonymous

**Methods**

- 24 question survey designed to garner staff feedback pre and post process change.
- Emailed to all nurses and technicians on staff prior to the implementation of the designated alert team role and 8 weeks after the implementation.
- Descriptive statistics and 2 tailed-t tests were used to analyze data.

**Implications**

Involving staff nurses in change processes within the department creates a collaborative environment which can have a great impact on patient safety.