Triage Training to Improve the Environment in a Large Emergency Department

Stacy Frisbie, DNP, RN and April Trenary, DNP, RN, CCRN, CNE

PROBLEM

- Unexpected Death of Long-time Manager
- High Turnover
  This is a problem nationwide, but this ER had nurses leaving rapidly. Over 20 RN’s resigned in a single month.
- Short Staffing with Heavy Patient Loads
  Nurses complained of symptoms associated with moral distress, compassion fatigue, and burnout syndrome.
- Frustration With Triage
  Experienced Nurses - inaccurate assignment of patient Estimated Severity Index (ESI) & delays in patient throughput.
  Novice Nurses - felt unequipped and underprepared due to lack of experience with acute patients & lack of mentoring.

Average Patient Wait Times

Purpose

- Work Environment
- ED Wait Time
- Triage Training Program
- Intent-to-stay
- Triage Acuity Accuracy

IMPLEMENTATION

PROCESS

- Previous orientation plan included 6 months of general medical orientation in the ER. Students were oriented to triage prior to being oriented to acute and trauma patients.
- New graduates were being asked to triage patients without knowledge of acute care practices.
- Process changed to include acute/trauma training around 6 months, and triage training at 9-12 months.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Nurse Empowerment

EVALUATION

- Anticipated Turnover Scale (ATS)
- Conditions for Work Effectiveness Questionnaire II
- ED wait time (Door-to-atrie)
- Triage acuity evaluation

The implementation of the program included two practice classes and two educational sessions. SFH plans to continue this several times a year; eventually the class will be for novice ED nurses.

The unprecedented global pandemic of COVID-19 impacted the ability to evaluate the patient specific metrics for this project. Evaluation now and in 1 year will be influenced by the changes in practice to follow CDC recommendations and national shelter-in-place orders.

Positive feedback of nurse empowerment from experienced and novice nurses warrants continuation of the program.

PRACTICE IMPLICATIONS

A healthy work environment and empowerment are strong predictors of nurses’ intent-to-stay. The authors hypothesize that the new triage training program will improve triage competence, empower nurses to be confident in their practice, decrease frustration, improve efficiency and thus improve the overall work environment.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Stacy Frisbie, DNP, RN - sfrisbie@samford.edu
April Trenary, DNP, RN, CCRN, CNE - atrenary@samford.edu
Faculty Advisor: Dr. Amy Bigham