Abstract

Implementing a Disposition Process Map to Improve

Ambulance Patient Offload Times in the Emergency Department

Background: Ambulance patient offload delays in the emergency department have been determined to be harmful to patients, costly to the emergency medical service companies, and stressful for the ED staff. To date, research has only proposed costly and risky options to address this issue.

Purpose: This study aimed to develop an individualized plan for an emergency department to reduce their ambulance patient offloading times without additional staff or physical space.

Methods: This was a quantitative quasi-experimental study using a retrospective and prospective review. Nurses at a select hospital were educated on an offloading process map. The knowledge acquisition of the educational intervention was measured using a pre and posttest. Offloading times at the hospital were retrieved three months before the intervention education and three months after.

Results: Statistically significant improvements were found in the offloading times ($t = 3.19$, $p = .042$) as well as the nurse knowledge ($t = -12.29$, $p = .000$) post-intervention. Although this study showed improvements in reducing offloading times, it may be difficult to translate the intervention to other hospitals. Further research on the topic is required to determine the most effective strategies for improving ambulance patient offload delays.

Keywords: Emergency department; Ambulance offloading; Offloading delay; Educational intervention; Throughput