

# **Improving Nurse-Patient Communication to Impact Patient Satisfaction**

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## **Structured Abstract**

### **PROBLEM/BACKGROUND**

In 2020, Merit Health Central identified that their patient experience scores on the HCAHPS surveys for questions linked to nursing communication were below the national average (Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, n.d.). Merit Health Central's 45-bed telemetry inpatient unit Press Ganey score is 65 percent (Press Ganey, 2020). This percentage has negatively affected the total hospital score. Reporting at the bedside utilizing the ADIET tool on the telemetry unit at Merit Health Central will allow the opportunity for nursing staff to include patients in the reporting process and help to increase communication and the patient's awareness of their plan of care. Successful outcomes for the individualized nursing care of each patient are a result of good communication between the patient and the nursing staff (Sibiya, 2018). Communicating well means nurses explained things clearly, listened carefully to the patient, and treated the patient with courtesy and respect (Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, n.d.). Communication between the nurse and the patient can transpire at any time throughout the hospitalization, but the ultimate opportunity is during shift reporting.

### **PROJECT PURPOSE**

The purpose of this project is to impact patient satisfaction in nurse communication and HCAHPS scores through the incorporation of AIDET principles.

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK:**

For the DNP project, Hildegard Peplau's middle-range theory of interpersonal relationships will be utilized. Peplau's theory of interpersonal relationships is known for recognizing the significance of patients' experiences in nursing care (Hagerty, Samuels, Norcini-Pala, & Gigliotti, 2017). Peplau stressed that patient experiences can be affected by good nurse-patient relationships (Hagerty, Samuels, Norcini-Pala, & Gigliotti, 2017). Bedside reporting is a crucial part of building the relationship between nursing staff and patients. Peplau believed that research shows that a focus on patient needs and their perceptions are most important (Hagerty, Samuels, Norcini-Pala, & Gigliotti, 2017). The interpersonal relationships model follows a theoretical basis for the concept of communication.

### **METHODOLOGY**

A quality improvement project at Merit Health Central located in Jackson, MS was implemented for the DNP project. The implemented project included the use of a standardized scripted shift report that incorporated the AIDET principles which was used at the beginning of each 12-hour shift. The target population was alert and oriented adult patients over the age of 18 admitted to the telemetry unit. If visitors were present at the bedside, the nurse asked the patient if they would like the visitors to leave the room as confidential patient information would be discussed. If the patient was not alert and oriented, but their medical power of attorney (determined by documentation present in a patient's chart) was present, the nurse included them in the process. The nursing staff to participate in the project included all RNs and LPNs who work on the telemetry unit during the

implementation period. If the RNs and/or LPNs were floated to this unit, the telemetry nursing staff oriented the float nurse to the patient engagement process and the scripted questions.

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

The quality improvement project which integrated the AIDET principles into the bedside shift reporting tool was implemented on the telemetry unit at Merit Health Central. Items necessary for this project included the standardize/scripted report sheet template and pen to utilize during the patient engagement at the beginning of each 12-hour shift.

## **EVALUATION**

HCAHPS survey scores were reviewed at the beginning of April 2021, which allowed for February and March HCAHPS results to return. The outcomes measured include any changes in HCAHPS scores related to communication. At the end of the data collection period results were analyzed and disseminated to the Merit Health Central administrators and the DNP project for project conclusion.

## **RESULTS**

Merit Health Central's 45-bed telemetry inpatient unit Press Ganey score increased to 66 percent for the months of February and March from 65 percent (Press Ganey, 2021).

## **IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE**

This project has significance to the field of nursing. While the objective was not entirely met, the project identifies need for further study in this area. Also, the project set out to improve communication between nurses and their patients, which is a crucial aspect of nursing care. The project helped to identify the importance of communication and also demonstrates that an increase in positive patient feedback can be seen with the implementation of increased communication and bedside reporting. Suggested changes for nursing practice would be to increase meaningful conversation held with patients and to keep the patient actively involved in their care when appropriate. While meaningful conversation is often a skill addressed in nursing school, it is a skill that many nurses can continue to build on throughout their career. Additionally, nursing education within the organization would play an active role in disseminating best practice in communication to nursing staff if this initiative was implemented in other settings. This project identifies opportunity for change in practice at the unit and organization level by enabling nurses to participate in the bedside report process and engage their patients in participating in their own care.

## **REFERENCES**

Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. (n.d.) Hospital Compare. Retrieved <https://www.medicare.gov/hospitalcompare/Data/Hospital-returns.html>

Press Ganey. (2021). *HCAHPS Theme Q3*. Press Ganey: Author

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