

Good Handover Improves Patients Care.

A Quality Improvement Project.

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Introduction

Handover is an important element of daily medical practice which should be carried out appropriately to ensure patient safety. Poor handover can be responsible for otherwise avoidable adverse events which can impact on patient safety.¹

Royal College Surgeons of England (RCSENG) has released recommendations on safe handover. The guide addressed the need of continuous monitoring of handover practice in order to ensure patient safety.²

We aim to improve the handover practice in elective orthopaedics unit through QI methodology.

Patients and Methods

Standards were set based on RCSENG recommendations. Data was collected from the ward team including junior doctors and advanced nurse practitioner using a survey questionnaire.

The readily available handover document pro-forma was revised and a handover agenda was developed based on the RCSENG recommendations.

4 weeks later, a post-intervention audit was conducted using the same methods.

Results

The pre-intervention audit revealed that 100% of the responders reported adequate and uninterrupted time during handover, they understood proposed jobs during duty shifts, and were fully aware of patient location and identifiable details.

Post-intervention audit showed significant improvement in multiple domains. Percentage of the staff who thought the handover document was clear and easy to understand increased from 60% to 100%.

Majority of them had better understanding of patient clinical history (80% vs 60%) and agreed that they knew who to escalate to in an emergency situation (80% vs 20%).

All of them believed the patient care was smoother and no unnecessary delay in discharges.

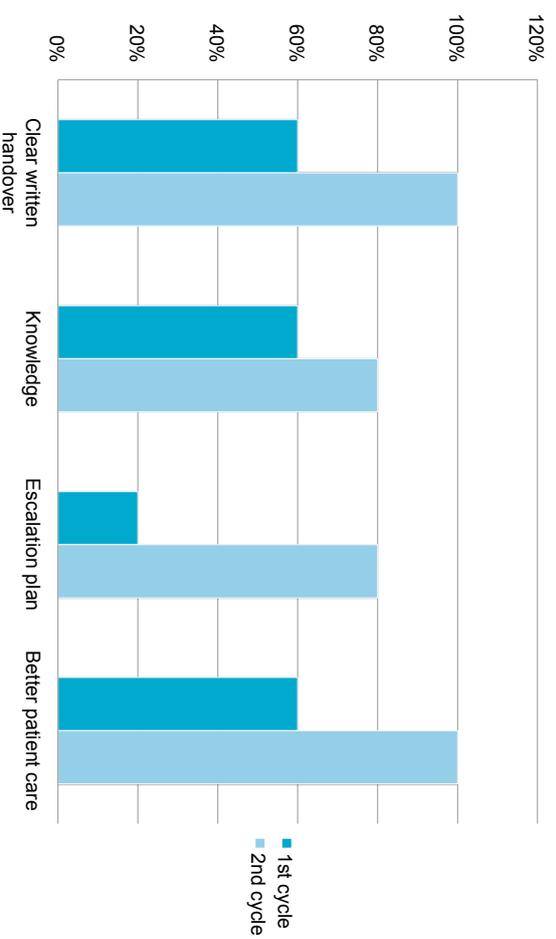


Figure 1: Summary of post-interventions improvements

Discussion

Handover of care is one of the most important forms of communication in medicine. Accurate and planned handover is essential to anticipate, recognize and prevent deterioration in clinical conditions of patients.³

Good handover practice also benefits doctors. It can be an invaluable learning opportunity in term of communication skills as well as clinical education. Effective handover makes sure doctors are able to provide the best quality of care to patients, which is a fundamental element of job satisfaction.⁴

A good structured handover pro-forma and planned agenda could significantly improve the handover practice. This QI project demonstrates that Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) is effective in improving daily practice in a timely manner.

References

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