ENHANCING INTERPROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION VIA A PICTOGRAM BASED COMMUNICATION INTERVENTION

Authors:
Terri Middlebrooks, BSN, RN; Sarah Savage, OT/L; Susan Powell, CRNP; Ida Haney, BSN, RN; Scywanda Cole, RN; Liz Hazelrig, RN; Patricia Denson, BSN, RN; Melissa Mancini, MSHA; and Kellie Flood, MD

University of Alabama-Birmingham (UAB) Hospital/Health System, UAB Division of Gerontology, Geriatrics and Palliative Care and UAB Geriatric Education Center, Birmingham, Alabama

PROBLEM: Not all ACE Unit staff are able to attend daily interprofessional team rounds due to work schedules and logistics.

SOLUTION: Develop pictograms to communicate patient functional and cognitive status to all unit staff.

Problem Identified: Acute Care for Elders (ACE) Unit interdisciplinary team rounds are conducted daily at this hospital to review patients’ cognitive, sensory, and functional status. Some ACE staff are not able to participate in the daily team rounds (i.e., patient care techs, night shift).
Solution Formulated  Pictograms were developed for use on patient room white boards to communicate status to care providers. Surveys assessed the impact on communication of patient status and receptiveness of patients/families.

An interprofessional team of geriatricians, occupational therapists, and nurses developed 12 pictograms symbolizing patients’ cognitive, sensory, and functional status.

NICHE Role  The NICHE Geriatric Resource Nurse (GRN) core curriculum is designed for use by those at NICHE sites who train nurses in best practices for hospitalized older adults. GRNs are the foundation of system-wide improvement to achieve positive outcomes for hospitalized older adults. The NICHE program, available to hospitals throughout North America, offers evidence-based, interdisciplinary approaches to promote improved care for the hospitalized older adult. GRNs can perform assessments similar to the one described in this Solution story to understand the characteristics of the older adults at their hospitals.

Evaluation/Results  A survey assessing ACE staff knowledge of patient status was administered pre- and post-pictogram implementation. A second survey assessed patient/family satisfaction with the pictograms.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly agreed/agreed</th>
<th>Pre score</th>
<th>Post score</th>
<th>Absolute change</th>
<th>Relative change</th>
<th>Fold increase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knew what was discussed in rounds when not able to attend</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>210%</td>
<td>3 fold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knew if patient had cognitive impairment</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>194%</td>
<td>3 fold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knew if patient had hearing impairment</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>1.8 fold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knew if patient had vision impairment</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>112%</td>
<td>2 fold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used board for patient/family teaching</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>150%</td>
<td>2.5 fold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patients/families received care information from board</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>268%</td>
<td>3.7 fold</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Patient/Family Survey Results (13 patients and 10 family members completed survey)

- Pictograms improved communication between staff and myself:
  91% of patients/families “Strongly Agreed/Agreed”
  Pictograms were easy to understand:
  96% of patients/families “Strongly Agreed/Agreed”
  I would like future pictograms to be used during future hospitalizations:
  96% of patients/families “Strongly Agreed/Agreed”

For more information
3. Planning and Implementation Guide: Chapter 5 - The NICHE Staff Development Guide and Chapter 6 - Geriatric Nursing Protocols for Best Practice. (Available at NICHE Knowledge Center, accessed via www.nicheprogram.org.)

NICHE-related resources

About NICHE
NICHE (Nurses Improving Care for Healthsystem Elders) is an international program designed to help hospitals and healthcare organizations improve care of older adults. The vision of NICHE is for all patients 65—and-over to be given sensitive and exemplary care. The mission of NICHE is to provide principles and tools to stimulate a change in the culture of healthcare facilities to achieve patient-centered care for older adults. NICHE, based at NYU College of Nursing, consists of hospitals and healthcare facilities in the U.S., Canada and Bermuda. For more information visit nicheprogram.org.