Emergency Department (ED) Safety Checklist

Improving safety and reliability in overcrowded urgent care systems

Overview

Designed to address the shared challenge of ensuring patient safety during periods of crowding, the ED Safety Checklist was originally developed and tested by University Hospitals Bristol NHS Foundation Trust with support from the West of England AHSN and the Health Foundation.

The checklist helps to standardise and improve the delivery of basic care in emergency departments, systemising the observations, tests and treatments that need to be completed in a certain order. It serves as an aide-memoire for busy staff, and any doctor, nurse, bank or agency staff can join the department and provide the right care by following the time-based framework of tasks.

Results / impacts

Since University Hospitals Bristol introduced the Checklist, there have been no clinical incidents due to failing to spot deteriorating patients or delays in care.

All emergency departments in the West of England (spanning six hospital trusts and the ambulance service) have adopted the Checklist.

In 2017 the Health Service Journal named the ED Safety Checklist ‘best patient safety initiative in A&E’ and it won second prize in the Royal College of Emergency Medicine’s annual award.

The AHSN’s role

Following the success of the initiative at University Hospitals Bristol, the West of England AHSN through its Patient Safety Collaborative supported all emergency departments in the region to adopt the Checklist, and developed a special toolkit to aid its adoption.

The AHSN has created a network for the seven sites and the ambulance service to benchmark progress and share learning. The consultant leads, nursing leads and data collectors for each of the sites meet annually and join a conference call every six weeks to share information on challenges they are facing, approaches they are testing and performance data.

Adoption and spread

Unless they are already using an equivalent evidence-based system, all hospitals trusts in England are now encouraged by NHS Improvement and NHS England to use the both the ED Safety Checklist and the supporting toolkit.

Find out more

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www.weahsn.net/ed-checklist