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ICU quality improving project: Improving the quality & efficacy of nursing handover by using SBAR

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Introduction: Nursing handover is a critical component of health-care quality and safety. According to WHO & JCI, 2007, a handover is the process of passing patient-specific information from one caregiver to another for the purpose of ensuring patient care continuity and safety. According to Riegel, 2005, nursing handover is a system of nurse-to-nurse communication between shift changes intended to transfer essential information for safe, holistic care of patients.

Purpose: The purpose of our survey was; a) to assess the quality and efficacy of nursing handover in our ICU b) to evaluate nurse's knowledge about ISBAR c) to implement the concept of ISBAR in our handover and d) most importantly to improve quality of patient care by applying safer and evidenced based nursing handover techniques.

Method:

Sampling Frame

We conducted a cross sectional survey to assess the efficacy of nursing handover in our ICU at Mediclinic City Hospital. Our 15 bed ICU consist of 3 beds in isolation and 12 beds in open bay. Our nursing staff comes from different professional and cultural background. Nursing handover usually takes place at the beginning of the shift, at the time of change in patient assignment and while receiving patient from different nursing units and hospitals. The handover generally takes 15-20 minutes but it can be more or less depending upon patient's condition.

Audit development and formatting

The members (nurses) of quality task force of our ICU investigated and generated the assessment criteria to be included in the audit form. After several discussions within the task force and with the guidance of our unit manager final audit form was made keeping in view that it has to be concise yet covering all the aspects of handover so that it provides accurate data and is less time consuming for the auditors. The audit has to be done by the members of quality task force only.

Inclusion & Exclusion criteria

All the nurses working in our ICU (full time/part time) were included in the survey except the nurses who are member of quality task force. Also the nurses from other department and hospitals were excluded from the survey.

Result: Good nursing handover is vital to protect patient safety and provide quality care. Systems need to be put in place to enable and facilitate handovers. Using SBAR has helped us in managing information and deliver safe handovers. After the implementation of SBAR in our handovers, we were able to reach 95% compliance and it reduced errors significantly and improved patient outcomes

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Notes: