Converting Surgical Services Handoff from Paper to Electronic

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Purpose and Significance

The current practice in Surgical Services at Mayo Clinic in Arizona utilizes both paper and verbal handoffs during the transfer of care. Medication inconsistencies and documentation errors with the current handoff practice were brought forward to Nursing Informatics. In July 2015, a workflow change was implemented, however documentation errors continued. According to Joint Commission (2012), verbal and paper hand-off communications account for 80% of serious medical errors and are proven to be ineffective, inaccurate, and inconsistent. Joint Commission (2012) recommends “synthesizing patient information from separate sources before passing it on to the receiver” (p. 3). Additionally, AORN (2015) supports the use of a standardized electronic handoff to improve “accuracy, reliability, and quality of information” (para. 1). Furthermore, standardization eliminates reliance on memory, workarounds and shortcuts (Chard, 2010).

Goals

Electronic Handoff Project Aims to:
- Improve efficiency for handoffs
- Reduce miscommunications
- Consolidate essential information into one view

PICO

For patients in Surgical Services in which electronic handoff is utilized, is the risk of unplanned events, near misses, and medication errors decreased compared with the current paper handoff?

Methods

- Obtained leadership approval and support
- Collaboration with report writer for development of tool that pulls essential information from the EHR
- Included prompts for communication of crucial information not included in the EHR

Results/Evaluation

Success of the project will be determined by comparing the occurrence rate of transplant medication errors from July 1, 2015 to the date of implementation of the new electronic form. A post implementation assessment will be conducted using the same timeframe interval.

Implications for Practice

- wrong site, wrong patient, wrong surgery events
- medication errors
- work effort
- surgical delays

Next Steps

Educate Staff on:
- Use & function of electronic handoff
- Workflow practice changes
- Requirement for EVERY patient

Go Live Support:
- Nursing Informatics
- Clinical Education

References
