IMPLEMENTATION OF INDIVIDUALIZED ELECTRONIC DISCHARGE INSTRUCTIONS FOR AMBULATORY SURGERY PATIENTS
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Problem Identification: Patients in the ambulatory surgery unit were discharged home with generic paper instructions and prescriptions. Supplemental handwritten instructions were time-consuming and sometimes illegible and inaccurate, which contributed to delays in patient discharge as nurses needed to seek clarification from physicians.

Objectives: The objective was to implement computerized service-specific discharge instructions and prescriptions.

Process of Implementation: A multidisciplinary group comprised of physicians, representatives from IT, nurses, and pharmacists was formed to develop service-specific computerized discharge order sets using the existing computerized physician order entry system. Drafts of service specific order sets with drop-down features for physician preferences were constructed by the team. Revisions and approvals were obtained from physician chiefs or designees. Physicians were asked to standardize instructions and medication whenever possible. The nurse educator provided education to the ambulatory surgery nurses. Education and go-live date were provided to physicians via email and a PowerPoint presentation of relevant screen shots. Representatives from information technology provided one week of go-live support.

Successful practice: Patient-specific discharge order sets were developed for the ambulatory surgery patients and are printed upon admission to the PACU. These include emergency contact information and prescriptions and individualized discharge instructions.

Positive outcome achieved: Discharge instructions are individualized, accurate and legible, for both RN and patient.

Implications for Perianesthesia Nurses: It is possible to provide individualized accurate discharge instruction to ambulatory surgery patients through a computerized order entry system; this contributes to a streamlined discharge process.