A Time to Teach:

Would Giving Discharge Instructions Preoperatively Improve Patient Satisfaction in Outpatient Surgery?

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Background:
Patient satisfaction is a key benchmark for outpatient surgery. Patients and their families are usually given discharge instructions immediately before discharge after patients have had anesthesia and narcotic pain medication. Patient satisfaction scores were historically low in this area. Many times patients did not remember being given the instructions. Management and staff were concerned patients would not be satisfied with instructions they did not remember, and therefore, would not be able to safely care for themselves at home after surgery. Project conducted at Medical Center of Lewisville, Lewisville, Texas, an HCA facility.

Limitations:
One limitation noted in this study was the facility changed from using Gallup patient satisfaction surveys to Press Ganey patient satisfaction surveys on January 1, 2015. The study was originally planned to be a retrospective study in which six months of patient satisfaction data before the intervention was compared with six months of post-intervention data. However, in order to make a fair comparison of pre- and post-intervention data, a comparison was made between shorter time frames than what was originally planned. This led to another limitation of small patient sample size.

PICO Question:
Would giving outpatient surgery patients discharge instructions preoperatively as compared to immediately before discharge improve patient satisfaction with the instructions?

Research:
This project was guided by the Iowa Model of Evidence-Based Practice. A comprehensive literature search was conducted using online databases including EBSCO, CINAHL, Pub Med, the Cochrane Database, and the Joanna Briggs Institute.

Implementation:
- Literature was reviewed to identify key Evidence-Based Practice principles regarding patient education prior to surgery. Patients preferred to be informed about how to care for themselves before the day of surgery. Providing written brochures as well as verbal instructions improved retention of knowledge and information for patients.
- An audit/gap analysis was done to identify current practices and materials provided to patients.
- A standardized patient education folder was developed for surgery patients. The folder included brochures regarding pain management, fall prevention, and day surgery procedures and expectations. Color handouts with discharge instructions were included as well.
- Outpatient and Pre-Admit nursing staff were educated on the new education folders and the change in process to give the discharge instructions to patients at the preoperative visit. Nurses were instructed regarding what information was in the folders as well as how to present this information to the patients.

Results:
- Pre-intervention data was collected from February to March 2015. The intervention began on April 1, 2015. Post-intervention data was collected from April to May 2015.
- Four main questions concerning patient information regarding their procedures were considered for comparison. These questions were: Instructions regarding home care, Information patient received prior to surgery, Information given to the patient's family, and Information given day of surgery. Measured results included percentage of top box responses from the patients as well as Press Ganey rank of the facility in each category.
- Significant improvement in patient satisfaction with discharge instructions was seen after implementation of the education folders. Improvement was noted in all categories measured. In the category of Instructions regarding home care, scores improved from 84.4% top box responses to 93.8% top box responses. This resulted in a Press Ganey percentile ranking improvement from the 88th percentile to the 99th percentile.

Outcomes/Recommendation:
Significant improvement was seen in all categories regarding information given to patients and their families. A large improvement was also seen in overall patient satisfaction. The top box responses for overall satisfaction improved from 82.5% to 86.6%. The Press Ganey percentile ranking improved from the 85th to the 98th percentile. Further study is needed to see if there is a correlation between patients being better informed and prepared for their surgery and higher satisfaction levels with the entire surgical experience.

References: