

Knowledge is Power: Improving Patient Education About New Medication and Side Effects Prior to Discharge

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Introduction

The patient transition from hospital to home can pose a challenge to patients and caregivers in relation to multiple medication schedules. The health literacy of patients can limit the understanding of medication instructions.

A quality improvement project was implemented to improve our Transition Post Anesthesia Care Unit (TPACU) monthly Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and System (HCAHPS) scores related to discharge information about new medication and side effects.

Based on our monthly Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and System (HCAHPS), scores from December 2014 to December 2015 showed the patient satisfaction domain of staff describing medication side effect was 62.5%.

Objective

The aim of this project was to improve patient knowledge and awareness of their current medications and potential side effects.

The objectives of this project were to create a visual aid handout with detailed medication information that included:

- Domain picture
- Type of medication
- Name of medicine and how it is administered
- Common side effects and special considerations

The items included in the handout were reviewed by our institution's patient education department prior to implementation. The project reinforced nursing education about new medication and side effects using additional patient and family teaching modalities prior to discharge.

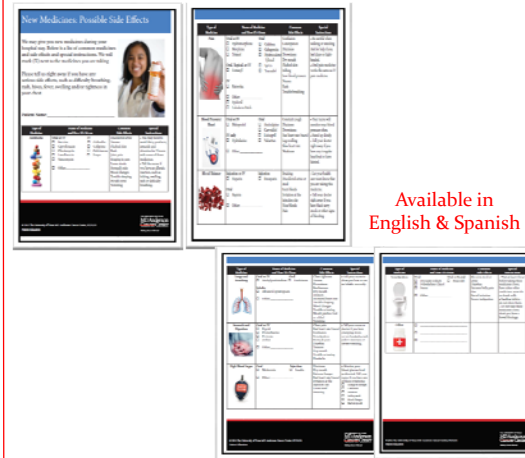
Implementation

Clinical nurses and pharmacy representative identified 8 categories of commonly used classes of new medications: antibiotics, pain, blood pressure/heart, blood thinners, lungs/breathing, stomach/digestions, high blood sugar, and constipation.

The nursing staff was educated through several teaching methodologies that included a PowerPoint presentation, one-to-one demonstration, and communication. Nursing staff were also taught about the importance of using the teach-back method to patients and creating a shame free environment for patients.

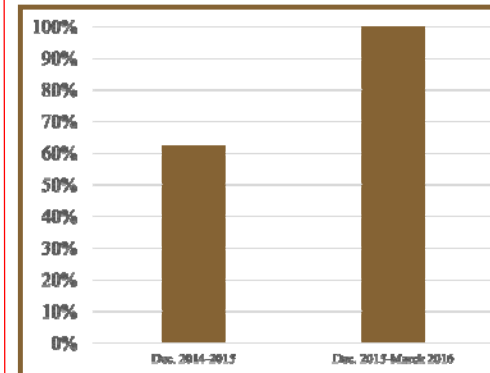
The implementation of the Patient Education: New Medication and Side Effects Handout began in December 2015.

Patient Education



Results

The HCAHPS quarterly scores from December 2015 to March 2016 increased from 62.5% to 100% in the medication side effects category. Our institution went live with an electronic health record in March 2016 and material was under review for future implications.



Implications for Nursing Practice

Patients receive many new medications while recovering from post-surgical procedures. There is a concern of whether a patient/caregiver understands the reason for the medication and the potential side effects.

Nurses have a responsibility to ensure that the educational material provided to the patient and caregiver is understandable.

The feedback from patients and caregivers can assist the nursing staff to develop and re-evaluate the effectiveness of this teaching tool and modalities.

The need to address the patient's understanding for new medication, and its side effects, can be applied to any setting.

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