

POSTOPERATIVE TELEPHONE CALL: KEY ELEMENT IN TRANSITION OF CARE

Team Leader: Mary Rachel Romero MSN, RN, CPAN, CAPA

University of Colorado Hospital, Aurora, Colorado

Team Member: Melanie Sandoval PhD RN

Background Information: In October 2012, CMS implemented a ruling that significantly affected healthcare institutions, penalty for high readmission rates. Since then, measures on how to prevent readmission rates or adverse outcomes post discharge from healthcare facilities are being conceptualized, reviewed and implemented. Two of the root causes on re-hospitalization as cited by the Center for Transforming Healthcare was inadequate patient education and lack of follow up measures after discharge from facility. Poorly managed transitions can diminish health and increase cost (Health Policy Briefs, 2012).

A study conducted on whether patients understand their discharge instructions indicated that “patients commonly remain confused about aftercare information following treatment in an ED (Zavala and Schaffer, 2011).” The study further recommended the use of follow-up telephone calls as beneficial in recognizing and supplementing patient’s knowledge deficit. Another study on patients who received educational telephone calls after radical prostatectomy claimed that the calls were helpful and served as resource. Postoperative phone calls allow clarification and reinforcement of discharge instructions thereby ensuring patient care compliance.

Objectives of Project:

Highlight the effectiveness of Postoperative Telephone Calls in:

- a. assessing patients’ needs after discharge
- b. reinforcing postoperative discharge instructions
- c. improving patient satisfaction

Process of Implementation:

- Conducted phone survey using a formatted questionnaire
- Restructured postoperative call questions in electronic documentation system to prompt RNs
- Created guidelines on the process of conducting a postoperative phone call

Statement of Successful Practice:

- Identified areas for improvement during the discharge process
- Ensured continuity of care after discharge i.e. assessment and intervention
- Encouraged patient safety by avoiding adverse events
- Promoted patient engagement by identifying and reinforcing knowledge of discharge instructions

Implications for Advancing the Practice of Perianesthesia Nursing: Creating a surgery specific postoperative phone call questionnaire captures more data to improve discharge processes for different fields of practice. Postoperative telephone calls allow for continuity of care and Improves patient safety for all outpatient surgery procedures. Cost effective-low margin activity.