Introduction

• The Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (HCAHPS) survey of hospital care (CMS, 2020) is a national, standardized, publicly reported survey of patient’s perceptions.
• Two questions in the HCAHPS survey assess how well providers explain and educate patients on their medications and associated side effects.
• This DNP project evaluated an academic medical center’s quality improvement program designed to improve HCAHPS scores for these two indicators using a patient centered educational campaign.

Background and Significance

• Patient satisfaction is viewed as a significant indicator of quality of care.
• The value-based purchasing (VPB) introduced by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS): Reimburses hospitals based on the quality of care provided instead of the quantity of services provided.
• CMS administers HCAHPS surveys 48 hours – 6 weeks after discharge to a random sample discharged patients.
• In the most recent HCAHPS survey data for the period of April-June 2020, the project’s site scored 56.7% on the medication communication questions.
• The goal of the project site was to improve HCAHPS scores to be closer to the national average of 66%. 

Methods

Design: Program evaluation of an existing quality improvement initiative
Setting: A 965-bed Academic Medical Center in Central, New Jersey
Sample: Two pilot nursing units
Measures: HCAHPS scores and hospital staff survey
Analysis: Trends in scores pre-/post-implementation. Descriptive statistics for staff survey

Educational Interventions Included:
- Common medication side effects badge
- Kardex cards of commonly use medications
- Medication Side Effect Sticker
- Lexicomp for medication education

Results

Communication About Medications: HCAHPS Scores

Discussion

- Two of the most successful medication education tools were the medication Kardexes and use of Lexicomp on the hospital in-tranet.
- After the implementation of a medication education campaign, the data of the two pilot units were mixed.
- Overall, the medication education campaign was noted to have had some success on both units. Trends showed either an increase or stability of HCAHPS scores during the last quarter of 2020.
- A longer period of 6 to 12 months would have been more helpful to identify long term impact over time.

Implications for Practice

- The use of a medication education campaign has potential to increase patient satisfaction as well as increase the HCAHPS scores of individual units and project site.
- Healthcare organizations are being encouraged to initiate a proactive approach to provide medication education to patients not only at discharge but throughout the hospitalization stay.

Implications for Policy

- Nurses have a positive effect on patient medication education.
- Incorporating time for nurses to provide education is imperative to providing safe, high-quality, patient care.
- Requires a multi-disciplinary approach to include pharmacy, pharmacists, pharmacy students and residents.

Implications for Quality and Safety

- Encouraging patients and their family members to ask about patients’ medications and provide proper medication education can improve patient satisfaction, medication adherence and patient safety.

Summary

- This project used a quality improvement framework to improve the Communication about Medicine HCAHPS scores and patient satisfaction.
- Medication education tools can augment and enhance patient adherence and understanding of medications.
- Implementing an organization-wide medication education campaign can be used to positively affect HCAHPS scores and patient satisfaction.
- Continued efforts to improve and address patient understanding of their medications and side effects remains a critical component of providing high-quality care.

References


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