

Bridging the Communication gap: A patient safety initiative

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Abstract

Too often health care providers believe they have effectively conveyed pertinent information during transfer of care that will ensure patient safety. However, my review of the literature contradicts this belief and showed that the communication is in fact, less than effective. As patients are discharged from hospitals, the discharge information needs to include specific instructions on the care and maintenance of devices if these patients are discharged with VADs. Being attuned to the negative impact communication gaps have on patient safety, my Major Research Paper (MRP) puts forward a framework to successfully roll out an information sharing process to bridge the gap in communication as it relates to the needs of nurses and patients.

Inappropriate or lack of communication around the care of VADs can have a negative impact on patient outcomes. Patients with VADs, who receive inappropriate care, are at increased risk for morbidity and mortality directly associated with their vascular access. The specific patient issues that can occur are: line thrombosis, line infection, bleeding, and delays in receiving treatment. Community nurses expend time and effort trying to obtain information necessary to continue care at home in patients with VADs. Overall there are enormous costs to the system associated with VAD care on both an individual patient basis and to the community at large.

The intent of this paper is to present an Implementation Plan that will outline how to encourage the use of a communication tool (Appendix A) developed in collaboration with nurses from diverse practice areas. The issue of gaps in communication resonates with my professional values, in that I believe change is necessary in this area. My values are centred on providing excellence in the delivery of patient care. It is important to me as a nurse leader and change agent to lead improvement processes in communication between nurses caring for any patients discharged from the unit with a Vascular Access Device (VAD).

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