

Posters

Clinical Quality - Patient Centredness

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COMMUNICATION CHALLENGES BETWEEN DOCTORS & RELATIVES DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC: SIMPLE INTERVENTIONS WITH MEANINGFUL IMPACT

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Background: & Aims Visiting restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in reduced and inconsistent communication with the next-of-kin of elderly inpatients. This project aimed to improve communication between doctors and patients' relatives in accordance with the GMC Good Medical Practice guidelines which outline that doctors 'must be considerate to those close to the patient and be sensitive and responsive in giving them information and support'.

Methods: We created a virtual whiteboard on an elderly care ward in an inner London hospital documenting patient demographics, details of named next-of-kin and when they

had been contacted. We aimed to update next-of-kin within 48-hours of ward admission and subsequently twice weekly. The outcome was measured via identical 'pre- and post-intervention' questionnaires recording the next-of-kin's satisfaction with communication from the doctors. Questionnaires included 11 questions utilising a 5-point Likert scale for satisfaction. Results were anonymised and analysed using Microsoft Excel.

Results: Satisfaction with communication improved in 10 of the 11 domains of the questionnaire following intervention. Cumulative satisfaction scores post-intervention (N = 13) in comparison to pre-intervention (N = 25) were closer to the total possible satisfaction score per question for these 10 domains. The mean cumulative satisfaction score across all domains was 60% post-intervention compared with 44% pre-intervention. Satisfaction following intervention was particularly improved in the domains of frequency of communication (60% post-intervention).

32.8% pre-intervention) and how adequately questions and concerns were addressed (69.2% post-intervention; 45.6% pre-intervention).

Conclusion: During the COVID-19 pandemic healthcare professionals have had to adapt in communicating with patients' next-of-kin. Our Introduction of robust standards and a virtual whiteboard to track communication resulted in improved satisfaction and proved useful in adapting to remote communication. We propose that similar practice and standards are extended across additional wards to encourage widespread optimal and consistent communication between doctors and patients' relatives, an integral part of patient care.