Effectiveness of “Developmental Care Plan” Tool on Improving Cardiac Care Team Communication
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Abstract

We have recognized the importance of early intervention by the rehabilitative team in patients with congenital heart disease. In order for the interventions to be effective, good communication between the rehabilitative and the clinical teams is imperative. The purpose of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of the “Developmental Care Plan” tool on clear, consistent, and effective communication between the members of the rehabilitation team and the team at the CICU bedside.

To address the criteria question, and in keeping with the Joint Commission’s NPSG recommendations to improve the effectiveness of communication among caregivers, we designed a “Developmental Care Plan” tool in the form of a board that was placed in a clearly visible location at each patient’s bedside. The boards provided the opportunity for each member of the care team to communicate an abbreviated version of their recommendations in a place that was easily accessible to families and staff members alike. The different members of the team, including the family, were encouraged to use it as means to communicate among each other and with the parents. We also designed a questionnaire using Survey Monkey meant to evaluate the effectiveness of the tool based on perception of all team members. A link to the questionnaire was distributed to all providers who see patients in the CICU (MDs, Nurse Practitioners, Registered Nurses, Speech Therapists, Occupational Therapists, Audiologists and Physical Therapists). Pre and post implementation surveys were collected to evaluate if there was any improvement in communication once the boards were implemented.

More clinicians were able to find the developmental plan (25% pre vs 39% post-implementation) and there was better communication with the nurses (46.4% pre vs. 66.7% post). Bedside team was better able to anticipate rehabilitation visits (6.7% pre vs. 42.9% post) and could better identify the therapist working with their patient (6.6% pre vs 46.2% post). The rehabilitation team was better able to approach the bedside team with recommendations (40% pre vs. 71.4% post) and could identify better the physical constraints for therapy (50% pre vs. 85.7% post). The overall perception of the providers was that the “Developmental Care Plan” board improved the communication among team members.

Studies have shown that providing early rehabilitative and developmental therapies to ICU patients decreases length of stay, decreases number of ventilator days, and improves muscle strength (1). A multidisciplinary care team approach improves and sustains long term outcomes for children with congenital heart disease. (2) The complexity of the patients in the ICU setting requires a team approach to accomplish the goals of rehabilitative services. However, consistent communication of the plan of care and goals among team members, patients and families has been identified as an area for improvement.

Method

All members of the multidisciplinary team (Medical Doctors, Nurse Practitioners, Registered Nurses, Speech Therapists, Occupational Therapists, Physical Therapists and Audiologists) were surveyed using Survey Monkey. Data was collected pre implementation and then at 1 month, 6 month, and 9 months post-implementation. Answers were then analyzed.

Care Plan Board

Based on our surveys, more clinicians were able to find the developmental plan for their patient (25% pre vs 39% post-implementation). The bedside team as a whole felt that communication improved (46.4% pre vs. 66.7% post). The bedside team was also better able to anticipate rehabilitation visits (6.7% pre vs. 42.9% post) since they knew when to expect them and they were better able to identify which therapist was working with their patient (6.6% pre vs 46.2% post).

On the side of the rehabilitation team, therapists reported a 35.7% increase in awareness of the physical constraints for post-operative patients post-implementation, and there was a 31.4% improvement in the comfort of the therapists when approaching the CICU team after intervention.

Conclusion

Assessment of parental perception of the Care Plan Board and determination if they find it useful for improving communication

References