ENHANCING SAFETY IN GENERAL WARD CARE

Sisse Olsen and Catherine Tighe
Clinical Safety Research Unit,
Imperial College London
c.tighe@imperial.ac.uk

Project aims
To create formalised, standardised multi-disciplinary information sharing system for improved handover and communication regarding patient care needs in out of hours periods (nights and weekends). System to use information technology (hospital intranet).

Aim of new system is to enhance safety in ward care

Project outline

1. **Feasibility study**
   Aim- To test feasibility and potential value of the project
   Method- Staff questionnaires/ interviews

2. **Major project**

Stage 0 -***Designing the information sharing system***
Design electronic information sharing system to be used in out of hours care
Method
-contact IT department in hospital
-how compatible is this idea with the intranet system?
-will need the facility to update the information on the system
-think about future applications i.e. whole hospital information sharing between medical and
surgical doctors and nurses (including respiratory physiotherapists and site managers team)
-Eventually? link to hospital records

Stage 1 – ***Observation, patient, wards and staff selection***
Method
Observation of current out of hours handover practice (medical and nursing)
(shadowing for 2-5 evenings).
Observation of role of site practitioner's team overnight

Patient selection
Study to include all patients of general surgical firms, including urology patients
Study to include all patients on HDU'S from these firms
Study to include patients admitted within last 24 hours from these firms
All anticipated needs/ problems with these patients to be covered

Ward selection
General surgical and urology wards in the trust

Staff to include

Surgical firms
Surgical nursing staff and HDU (High Dependency unit) nurses caring for surgical patient's in
HDU
? Intensive Care medics to have access to the system
Site practitioner's team
Respiratory physiotherapists

Stage 2 - ***Assessment of current handover practice (medical and nursing)***

Method
Baseline questionnaire of staff and interviews (regarding handover)
(refer to BMA handover guidelines when designing)

IT system pilot
Pilot of different computer presentations for new information sharing system- seek views of
clinical staff

Stage 3- ***Staff training on system and trial***
Method
Staff training to use new system
Run new IT system for one month
Monitor trial run from following perspectives (random checks)
-Patient Safety
-Uptake
-Complications

Stage 4 – ***Evaluation of system from trial period***
Method
Evaluate success of trial period from following perspectives
-Adherence (uptake)
-Quality of care within out of hours periods for these patients
-Complications

Evaluate staffs views on success of trial with post-intervention questionnaire
Questions to include
-How was the system to work with?
-How could it be better?
-How did it affect your workload?
-How did it affect patient safety?
-How did it affect teamwork across professional boundaries?
-Any other comments?