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Patient Throughput Checklist: A Solution to Prevent Hospital Discharge Delay

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Early and on-time discharge is essential to manage patient throughput efficiently. To achieve desired efficiency, a 2pm discharge time was identified as a goal for an observation unit. However, a chart review in 2015 showed an average of 4 – 36 hours discharge delay among End Stage Renal Disease (ESRD) patients who were admitted to observation unit for overnight stay following access surgeries. Fragmented care coordination, lack of communication, and delay in consultation with nephrologists were among the identified barriers. The purpose of this project was to evaluate the effectiveness of using Patients Throughput Checklist to facilitate on-time hospital discharge among ESRD patients who were admitted for overnight stay following their access surgeries.

Method

A multidisciplinary team was convened to explore processes to facilitate patient discharge. ESRD Patient Throughput Checklist was created with clear direction of care accountability for the observation nurse and the dialysis nurse to facilitate effective care coordination. Nurses partnered with the patients by clearly communicating the process and anticipated time of discharge. A retrospective chart review was then conducted to compare the discharge time among ESRD patients whose nurses did and did not utilize Patients Throughput Checklist.

Results

Ninety percent (N= 27) of the ESRD patients were able to discharge from the hospital before 2:00pm when nurses utilized the Patient Throughput Checklist. In contrast, 13% of ESRD patients (N=4) were discharged before 2:00pm when the nurses did not utilize the checklist.

Conclusion

Clearly identifying the problem, effective communication, patient engagement, and creative work processes developed by collaborative care team members can improve efficiency and minimize delay in hospital discharge. Utilizing the checklist enables health care provider team to be proactive in care coordination and completing tasks efficiently in order to achieve safe and timely hospital discharge of patients.

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