

Abstract

Ineffective communication and documentation have been found in the literature to have negative impact on patient safety and discharge delays in a hospital setting. This quality improvement project emphasizes the importance of handoff accuracy as it relates to patient care. A structured electronic handoff tool provides an organized method of sign out and can improve communication among caregivers. The objective of this initiative was to see if using a structured electronic handoff would improve the discharge process and patient safety outcomes as compared with a paper handoff tool. Permission to perform the project was obtained from the Nursing Director of the NICU along with approval of the Institutional Review Board (IRB). After permission was obtained, participants in the project were provided with a packet containing a pre-test, a PowerPoint education addressing knowledge about I-PASS and a post test. 60 RNs completed the study. The analysis revealed a statistical significance in the pre- and post-test scores ($S= 271$, $p<.00001$) on the question about the meaning of I-PASS. This project demonstrates there is still a great need for continual research to determine best practices regarding improvement in the discharge process and patient safety outcomes. Continued research is needed to evaluate the effectiveness in using I-PASS as a handoff tool to improve the discharge process and patient safety in the NICU.

Keywords: handoff, structured electronic handoff, I-PASS, patient safety, NICU nurses