Abstract

While rapid response teams (RRTs) are well-established in acute care settings as a strategy to recognize and respond to physiologically deteriorating patients, no studies have looked at their implementation in skilled nursing facilities (SNFs). Recently, with the influx of higher acuity patients admitted to SNFs because of Medicare reimbursement changes, SNFs must also manage their hospital readmissions to receive better incentives. This DNP project, a quality improvement (QI) initiative using Kotter's Model for Change Process as its framework, implemented an RRT in a SNF setting and sought to determine its effect on the facility's hospital readmission measure. Specific components of the RRT implementation include the use of the National Early Warning Score (NEWS) tool to identify and recognize the patient's decline and deterioration; the mechanism to activate the RRT; the formalization, formation, and delineation of RRT members' roles and responsibilities; the training and materials provided for nurses; and the data collection, analysis, and evaluation of its effect on the SNF's hospital readmission measure. The project's results were analyzed using a two-sided Fisher's exact test. Although the hospital readmission measure improved by 23.43% post-implementation, the test's p-value was greater than 0.05, signifying no statistical significance between the variables. Further research should be performed to expand the sample size, consider multi-facility settings, and increase the implementation timeframe. The initiative could also be expanded to include long-term care residents, use other aspects to evaluate risk factors for hospital readmission (e.g., diagnosis, lab results, medications), and incorporate electronic health records (EHRs) in future implementations.

Keywords: Rapid response system, rapid response team, skilled nursing facility, early warning system, National Early Warning Score, NEWS, proactive rounding, quality improvement, hospital readmission, rehospitalization, Kotter's Model for Change Process