Using Teach Back to Reduce Readmission Rates in Hospitalized Heart Failure Patients

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Background
Memory plays a key role in adherence and patient satisfaction.1 Studies demonstrate that patients forget 40-80% of the information they receive immediately after hearing it.2 Additionally, nearly half of the information they retain is incorrect.3 Given the importance of understanding one’s disease process and follow-up, this adversely impacts patient outcomes. Patients who do not clearly understand their disease state or post-discharge instructions may decompensate before seeing their PCP and subsequently get readmitted. National readmission rates for Medicare patients are around 20%, and for diseases like heart failure are closer to 23%. A multidisciplinary team was convened to develop a process to improve patient education and impact outcomes.

Purpose
Develop a patient education strategy for patients admitted with a primary diagnosis of heart failure.

What is Teach Back?
An effective communication strategy to evaluate learning.

Projects Design
A large multidisciplinary team has been using Lean methodology to improve the effectiveness and quality of care transitions.

1. A “Patient and Family Caregiver Education” group was formed as part of this larger effort
   - The smaller group consisted of healthcare clinicians from across the care continuum
   - The larger group was focused on providing more effective patient and family education across the Network

The smaller group developed, piloted and implemented a three-day integrated teach back process in the acute setting for individuals diagnosed with heart failure.

The team communicated metrics and formative evaluations to key sponsors and senior management on an ongoing basis during the pilot phase of the process.

Method
- Standard work was ultimately created

- Specific teach back questions were identified in the QI cycle and Lean methodologies.
- Developed sequential delivery of questions over three days
- Create and implement Network wide education related to teach back
- Create and implement standards of care for teach back
- E-Learning (1488 professionals)
- Performance validation on teach back standard work on all nursing units
- Readmission rates
- Length of stay (LOS)
- Patient satisfaction (Press Ganey)

Conclusions
- Teach back is a general concept that can be applied to multiple disease states.
- The concept can be taught quickly and spread throughout a hospital or network relatively quickly.
- Teach back appears to have the potential to positively impact readmission rates by improving patient understanding of their disease process.
- Teach back may also have a positive impact on patient satisfaction.
- Additional teach back modules are being developed for:
  - Anticoagulation
  - Stroke
  - Myocardial infarction
  - Hypertension
  - Community-acquired pneumonia
  - Chronic obstructive lung disease

References:

Results
- Over a three month period (July to September, 2010), 469 heart failure patients were evaluated
  - 180 patients received teach back
  - 289 patients did not receive teach back

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>2nd Stay LOS (days)</th>
<th>Readmission Rate (%)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No Teach Back</td>
<td>7.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teach Back</td>
<td>5.05</td>
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Teach Back Questions for Heart Failure

DAY 1 - Knowledge
- What is the name of your water pill?
- What weight gain should you call your doctor about?
- What foods should you avoid when you have heart failure?
- What are your symptoms of heart failure?

DAY 2 - Attitude
- Why is it important to take your medicine for heart failure every day?
- Why is it important to avoid foods with sodium (salt)?
- Why is it important to watch for the symptoms of heart failure?
- Why is it important to weigh yourself every day?

DAY 3 - Behavior
- How will you remember to take your water pill every day?
- How do you plan to change to a low-sodium (salt) diet?
- How will you check for heart failure symptoms every day?
- How will you weigh yourself every day?