

Bringing Our Best Practice Forward

Integrating Preformatted Patient Discharge Instructions into EHR

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Introduction/Background

With more and more surgeries evolving into outpatient procedures, there is a greater need to provide comprehensive patient teaching and education. Literature has shown that insufficient patient education results in poor outcomes, avoidable complications such as pain, fatigue, and decreased self care. [1] In May 2015, Brigham and Women's Hospital and its distributed campus went live with a newly acquired electronic health record (EHR), Epic. The initiation of EHR challenged our nursing practice in the area of patient education, discharge instruction and handouts for our ambulatory surgery patients. Prior to EPIC our patients received preformatted discharge instruction handouts that included: Surgeon and surgery specific education/instruction, education/instruction on caring for any placed lines or drains, and all contact information with phone numbers of "Who to call and when to call". Epic contains very generic discharge instructions but does not have such pertinent information; we had to determine a way to integrate our current nursing practice and patient care into our new practice that included EPIC

Methods

Within Epic there is a feature called SmartPhrase. This feature allows the user to create a word document that can be saved and shared with other users, SmartPhrases can be used on multiple encounters. Because we had saved all of the surgeon/surgery-specific discharge instructions in a shared file prior to Epic, we were able to open these documents, then copy and paste them into a SmartPhrase within the Epic system. We customized the new SmartPhrases, gave them an appropriate title that included both physician name and contact information along with all specific discharge instructions. Once these were created, we could attach the SmartPhrase that included the appropriate discharge instructions to the patient instructions column in the After Visit Summary (AVS) of the patients chart. The AVS is printed prior to the patient being discharged and the patient is given a paper copy for reference. All surgeons, and a group of Super Users, were made owners of the SmartPhrases. Patient specific SmartPhrases were granted to all end users so that they can import these instructions to AVS and modify on the day of surgery.

Results

Patients are able to receive up-to-date surgeon/procedure specific discharge instructions and education handouts with all pertinent and appropriate documentation included. With the patient specific customization allowed in AVS, care providers are able to review and/or revise any instructions given to the patient at any point prior to and/ or after discharge.

Discussion/Conclusion

This method proved effective for patient education, safety and communication among all persons involved in patient care.

References

1. Liebner, LM. I can't read that! Improving perioperative literacy for ambulatory surgical patients. Association of periOperative Registered Nurses, 2015; 101:4; 416-427.