Improvement in the Content and Mode of Delivery of Discharge Summaries from the Emergency Assessment Unit at Jersey General Hospital

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Background

• Evidence shows that good quality and prompt delivery of discharge summaries improves patient care, and that suboptimal transfer of information at hospital discharge can contribute to preventable adverse events [1].

• At Jersey General Hospital (JGH) discharge summaries are written by Junior Doctors and sent by mail to GPs

• The overall aim was to improve communication between the JGH Emergency Assessment Unit (EAU) and GPs to enable a smoother transition of patient care from secondary to primary care. The aim was to improve the content of discharge summaries and the mode of delivery.

Methods

In order to establish GP satisfaction and to assess any problems with JGH discharge summaries, a Survey Monkey questionnaire was developed and sent to all GPs on the Island of Jersey.

42 GPs completed the initial survey and 28 completed the repeat survey (67%).

The results of the primary survey showed that the main areas of concern were (Fig. 1):
  a) Delay in receiving the discharge summary
  b) Legibility of discharge summary medications

The proposed intervention was to fax discharge summaries from the EAU directly to GP surgeries the on the day of discharge.

3 months after the intervention a repeat survey was carried out.

Results

• 33% of participants were satisfied or very satisfied with the timeliness of discharge summaries compared to 5% prior to the intervention

• Ratings of the clinical information contained in the discharge summaries: 12% were satisfied or very satisfied before the intervention, increasing to 32% after the intervention

Future Plans and Lessons Learnt

Future Plans:
1. Introduce a faxed discharge summaries across all medical wards
2. Develop a discharge summary template to include specific information about; diagnosis, investigations performed, changes to medications and follow up; as stated in Royal College of Physicians guidance[2]

Lessons Learnt:
1. Implementing small changes to hospital practices can make a large difference to GP satisfaction
2. Discharge summaries are a fundamental part of patient care and should not be rushed or overlooked

References:

Figure 1. Main areas of concern for GPs with hospital discharge letters (pre intervention)

Figure 2. GP’s satisfaction (post intervention) (receiving a faxed discharge summary rather than receiving a letter)