

Communication with Health Care Providers

Nurse-Physician Communications

- Frequent occurrence**
- Communication across a hierarchy can be intimidating**
- Gender or cultural issues may complicate further**
- Often named as cause of nurse job dissatisfaction**
- Critical for patient safety**

Communication and Safe Care

- **60 % of medication errors are caused by mistakes in interpersonal communication (Joint Commission Data)**
- **Poor coordination of care is the most common cause of adverse events triggering root cause analyses**

Steps to Excellent Healthcare Communication



- 1. Assert concerns if needed**
- 2. Actively listen to response**
- 3. Concisely describe the problem**
- 4. Clarify the problem & gather data**

Communication with Other Healthcare Professionals

**Step 1 - Gather and clarify all of the information you
need to provide to the physician:**

- Nature of the problem**
- Supporting information or data**
- Clarify in your mind what you would like for the patient
to do**

Case Presentation

You are assigned to care for a 68 year old lady for the evening shift. She is two days post-op following hip fracture surgery.

No problems were noted at nursing sign-out other than c/o pain, for which she was receiving pain medication.

When you perform your initial assessment on this patient, you find her to be confused.

What additional information do you need to gather prior to contacting the physician?

Case Presentation

Additional information you might gather:

- **Vital signs and pulse oximetry**
- **Name, dose and timing of pain medication previously given**
- **Any additional observations that you feel would be helpful**

Case Presentation

- Vital signs and pulse oximetry

T 37.5, P 108, R 24, O₂ sat 82% (RA)

- Name, dose and timing of pain medication previously given

Morphine sulfate 2 mg IV two hours ago

- Any additional observations that you feel would be helpful

Patient's respirations seem somewhat labored

Communication with Other Healthcare Professionals

**Step 2 – State concisely to the physician the
problems that the patient is experiencing.**

- Nature of the problem**
- Supporting information or data**
- Question or issue on which you need his/her
input**

Role Play

When you call the resident physician on duty, how would you state your concerns and question?

Give a brief summary (no more than 60 sec) to the person sitting next to you.

Have that person give you feedback on:

- What was effective about your communication?**
- What could have been clearer?**

Communication with Other Healthcare Workers

Step 3 – Actively listen to information

communicated by the physician/healthcare workers

-Listen to the plan of care

**-Clarify areas which are unclear by asking
appropriate questions**

Case Presentation

-The resident physician asks that you obtain the following tests:

CXR ABG ECG

Routine blood work

Is there any additional information you need to know at this time?

Case Presentation

The CXR suggests pneumonia, and the resident orders an IV antibiotic.

Two hours later, as you start the antibiotic, you note that the patient is more short of breath.

You request that the resident re-evaluate the patient.

Communication with Other Healthcare Workers

**Step 4 – Know how to tactfully use assertive
communication when necessary**

- State your concern**
- State information that supports your concerns**
- Suggest a course of action**
- Recap why you feel this action is best option**

Assertive Communication in Patient Care

Is not:

- Yelling or bullying**
- Being disrespectful of authority**

Is:

- Focused on patient**
- Noting your perceptions**
- Persistently raising concerns, intended to move toward desired action**

Effective Communication

Essential for real teamwork

Essential for long term career satisfaction

Essential for patient safety and quality care