Inter-professional Hand-off Communication

Kathlyn E. Fletcher, MD MA
Professor of Medicine
Medical College of Wisconsin
Milwaukee VAMC

September 9, 2017
Wisconsin State ACP Meeting
What on earth?

Inter-professional hand-offs could be a continuum

• Rounding at the bedside with nurses and physicians as both change shifts at the same time

• Mindful attempt to include information under the control of one profession in the hand-off of the other
Objectives

• To describe what is known about interprofessional hand-offs

• To describe a QI project to improve/increase interprofessional hand-offs in the medical intensive care unit
Background premise

• Most adverse events involve communication as a contributing factor

• Hand-off require precise communication
  • Missing or inaccurate information can lead to error/injury
  • End point: shared mental model
The trouble with silos

• Significant overlap in content of nurse and physician hand-off communication
  • Nearly 50% information overlaps between RN and MD hand-offs
    • Patient demographics
    • Significant recent events
    • To-do list
    • Key physiologic parameters

• Occurs in silos

Collins, 2011 and 2012
Mars versus Venus?

• Nurses and physicians work and communicate differently
  • Challenge for effective communication

Deacon & Cleary, 2013
Local qualitative work—is this desirable and feasible?

• Student lead: David Serksnys

• Objective
  • To understand the benefits, downsides, barriers, and facilitators of interprofessional input into hand-off communication in the MICU

Methods

- Field observations of existing structured interprofessional communication
  - Afternoon rounds
- Field observations of physician and RN hand-off practices
- Brief surveys and semi-structured interviews with stakeholders
  - MDs (4 residents, 1 fellow, 3 faculty)
  - APPs (2)
  - Nurses (6)
- Analysis: grounded theory
Results
RN input into MD hand-offs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of interest</th>
<th>RN input into MD hand-off</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MD/APP interest in getting input</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very interested</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat interested</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat disinterested</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very disinterested</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Results
What MDs want from nurses

Nurse content of interest to physicians

- Family dynamics
- Patient data in context
- Changing patient condition
  - Vital signs
  - Pain
  - Mental status
Patient Data in Context

• “Since they spend more time with the patient, they have a much better sense of the context of their symptoms and the severity of their symptoms.” -MD

• “I’d walk into a room and I may find the patient is breathing 30 times a minute. . .which is alarming and abnormal, and the nurse may say ‘well you know we just finished physical therapy and this what usually happens when they have PT so she’ll settle down in five minutes or so.” -MD
Family Dynamics

• “Oftentimes we are caught up with other patients or caught up on rounds and we miss family members a lot. . . the nurses have a very good insight usually into what the patient’s family is thinking and what they are understanding and what they are reflecting on” – MD

• “We’re at the bedside, and we also sometimes have more contact with family, so we get their input and are able to talk about their concerns.” - RN
# Results

MD input into RN hand-offs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of interest</th>
<th>MD input into RN handoff</th>
<th>MD/APP interest in giving input</th>
<th>RN interest in getting input</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very interested</td>
<td></td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat interested</td>
<td></td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td></td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat disinterested</td>
<td></td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very disinterested</td>
<td></td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Results
What RNs want from MDs

Physician content of interest to nurses

- Technical data
- Anticipatory guidance
- Plan of care
- Goals of care
Anticipatory Guidance

• “I know that I always feel better talking things out. . . like what they think, how they feel about this patient, what they think is gonna happen the next couple hours to next shift or two.” – RN

• “And then, also just signing out what you think are gonna be the problem issues overnight, too . . . we discuss with them potential problems that we think are gonna be issues overnight” – MD
Plan of care

• “Just having a better idea of what the goal is for the patient, so we know what to do, how to better provide care to our patients and obtain that goal. ‘Cuz sometimes it seems like we’re on different pages.” – RN

• “Then they know why we’re starting certain things and why we’re thinking certain things, and if they see something different, they can tell us and then we can have that discussion. I think that’s really important to be on the same page.” – MD
Key facilitator

• Face to Face Communication

“You don’t take long to learn that it’s really helpful to go around at the end of the day before you sign out and talk to all the nurses and make sure there aren’t any big problems they see for overnight, and make sure everyone’s on the same page like that.” - MD
Key barriers

• Time
  • Very commonly cited

• Attitudes

“Some of my colleagues are very old school and they’re just not open to input on patient management issues from non-physicians. They just don’t. . .give them enough credit or, you know, value their opinion about something enough.” - MD
QI project

- Student lead: Eric Bauer
- Educational presentations to MICU staff
  - Introduce the problem and need for QI focused project
  - Outline intervention and assessment plans
- Laminated pocket-sized conversation cards
  - Contained prompts for specific informational desired by nurses and physicians
  - Focused on information not in the chart
  - For use during afternoon rounds
- Assessed outcomes using observations and surveys
Suggested questions for physicians/APPs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physician/APP questions for the Nurse</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>P/APP 1</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>P/APP 2</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>P/APP 3</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>P/APP 4</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>P/APP 5</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Results

**Physician/APP impressions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre-Intervention</th>
<th>Post Intervention</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall Satisfaction in patient hand-offs this week.</td>
<td>3.4/5</td>
<td>3.65/5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I gave input into the hand-offs of nurses this week.</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I received input for my hand-offs from nurses this week.</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Increase in all 5 suggested MD → RN questions
- Vital sign trends/explanation of rationale most commonly discussed
## Suggested questions for nurses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Nurse questions for physician/APP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N 1</td>
<td>What changes are you anticipating tonight?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N 2</td>
<td>Is there anything you want the overnight nurse to watch out for?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N 3</td>
<td>Is there anything out of the ordinary you want the cross-cover physician called about?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N 4</td>
<td>What are you most worried about with this patient overnight?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N 5</td>
<td>Can you explain the rationale for ____ part of the plan?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Results
RN impressions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre-Intervention</th>
<th>Post Intervention</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall Satisfaction in patient hand-offs this week.</td>
<td>3.37/5</td>
<td>3.5/5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I gave input into the hand-offs of APPs and/or physicians this week.</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I received input for my hand-offs from APPs and/or physicians this week.</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Not much interest in “anything out of the ordinary” question
- Explain the rationale was most common nurse question
- Satisfaction with inter-professional communication improved
In summary

• This work is consistent with national attention on interprofessional education/communication
• Look for existing opportunities for enhancing interprofessional communication around hand-off related issues
• We found interest on both sides
• We found moderate uptake of the intervention
• Next step: patient outcomes?
Would this work in your setting?

• In the MICU?
• On the wards?
Questions? Ideas?

Acknowledgements:
David Serksnys, BSN
Eric Bauer, BA
Rahul Nanchal, MD
Jennifer Neubauer, RN