Introduction

Across the country, acute care nurses are over extended due to staffing challenges, high volume of admissions and discharges, patient transports, and other episodic time consuming tasks.

Over extension of nurses has been associated with missed nursing cares, suboptimal patient care, and patient safety problems such as failure to rescue and patient falls.

In response to strained nursing resources created by growing inpatient census, the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics (UIHC) chose to implement Service Without Territory (SWOT) team in 2016.

Purpose

The purpose of this project is to begin a longitudinal evaluation considering SWOT’s impact upon selected indicators.

Objective 1: Intermediate - Determine the changing patterns of SWOT utilization over time.

Objective 2: Short Term - Understand current utilization barriers and facilitators related to SWOT team utilization.


Methods

Project was deemed not human subjects research
UIHC All adult patients from January 2016-December 2017
The analysis was completed using a mixed method approach:

Objective 1: A longitudinal analysis was completed to review SWOT utilization for every 1,000 patient days for a two year period.

Objective 2: Focus groups were conducted on a high and low SWOT utilization unit. Thematic analysis considered shared themes and differences.

Objective 3: Selected nurse sensitive patient outcomes were explored longitudinally for changes in patterns and sources of variation using control charts.

Conclusions

The innovative SWOT program has provided support to nurses, other members of the health care team and patients; improving the practice environment.

An improved practice environment aligns with the Institute of Medicine (IOM) recommendation to expand nurse opportunities to lead and diffuse collaborative improvement efforts.

While there have been publications related to SWOT, the current evaluation using Realistic Evaluation will expand our knowledge of the context, the mechanism, and the outcone.

Dissemination will be accomplished by the following:
- Manuscript: Journal of Nursing Administration (JONA)
- Regional Poster presentation: Iowa Organization of Nurse Leaders (IONL)
- National Poster presentation: Association of Nurse Executives (AONE)

Sustainability and continued program development can improve SWOT’s value to stabilize nurse workload, improve patient safety, and increase nurse satisfaction.

Recommendations for future studies:
- Most critical to explore is the unfulfilled request rate.
- Future studies need to account for the increasing number of SWOT FTEs and any relationship to utilization pattern.

Evaluation

SWOT was utilized in all adult units and the emergency department, there are differences in the rate of use.

The Medical Surgical Services division is consistently the largest SWOT user.

The most frequent requests are difficult intravenous catheter insertion and blood draws.

Both focus groups shared similar positive statements about the nursing support provided by SWOT.

Using Realistic Evaluation as a frame work, the comments by the focus groups provided a context for how SWOT is used.

The low utilization unit focus group conveyed a culture of independence “We try not to use SWOT – we do it all by ourselves – so when we need them, we really need them”.

Conversely, the high utilization unit conveyed a differential culture attitude toward SWOT, “We don’t hesitate – if we need help – we call SWOT.”

The initial exploration of nurse sensitive patient outcomes suggests the processes are stable and predictable with common cause variation.

References


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