A Team Approach to Improve Patient Communication
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OBJECTIVE
Make Our Patients Feel Welcome and Wanted

BACKGROUND
Mayo Clinic is the largest integrated, not-for-profit medical group practice in the world. Delivery from every individual specialty work together to care for patients, joined by common systems and a philosophy that the result of the care is the patient. Mayo Clinic is an organization of 26 hospitals and more than 1,200 locations in the United States and around the world. Mayo Clinic staff work at locations in Florida, which has campuses in Rochester, MN, Jacksonville, FL, and Scottsdale/Phoenix, AZ. Mayo Clinic also serves communities in the upper Midwest through the Mayo Clinic Health System. Collectively, these locations care for more than 3 million people each year. The annual growth of gastroenterology and Hepatology (GI) in Rochester, MN includes 221 physicians and 100 allied health staff. In 2010, the practice performed 73,000 endoscopic and 80,000 minimally invasive procedures. We have a dedicated quality improvement program which partners with a physician champion to oversee quality improvement efforts. As a goal of our practice is to improve patient satisfaction.

Mayo Clinic randomly surveys patients on an ongoing basis to understand their experiences and identify opportunities for improvement. Thirty-three percent of our GI outpatient office patients are surveyed each month. The survey questions are related primarily to general satisfaction, several aspects of quality care. The GI position has an active patient and family advisory council with the goal of understanding the needs of our patients and aligning our improvement activities with these needs. Each practice also monitors patient complaints and holds center on better and needs. Collectively, this information is used to identify opportunities to improve the satisfaction of our patients. In 2009, we identified the need to improve our communications with patients.

COMMUNICATION BEST PRACTICE

WHAT IS AIDET?

AIDET (Assess, Introduce, Diagnose, Empathize, Treat) is a patient communication tool, developed by the Studer Group, to ensure patient expectations are set and met. The core concepts of AIDET are:

- Assess - understand what is known to the patient and what needs to be revealed.
- Introduce - it is important to introduce ourselves and the entire team by ensuring everyone introduced speaks to the patient.
- Diagnose - clearly and accurately assess the patient's condition and communicate the medical diagnosis.
- Empathize - understand the patient's condition and emotions, and demonstrate a caring attitude.
- Treat - perform the identified treatment plan in a timely manner.

A patient communication program can be implemented without incurring incremental salary expense or productivity loss.

METHOD

- The AIDET patient communication tool, developed by the Studer Group, was chosen as our methodology. The program provides a consistent way to communicate with patients who are anxious, nervous and feeling vulnerable. AIDET helps us as healthcare professionals to share our experience, knowledge and training.

DISCUSSION

- The AIDET program was introduced to all GI staff on an ongoing basis. The program was enhanced with opportunities for feedback and support. AIDET training was conducted during work unit meetings.

- Patient complaints related to communication with provider decreased. Improvements in patient satisfaction scores and a decline in patient complaints can be achieved by enhancing communication between the provider and patient.

CONCLUSIONS

- Improvement in patient satisfaction scores and a decline in patient complaints can be achieved by enhancing communication between the staff and patient.

- AIDET communication program can be improved by delivering an increased level of information to patients.

- Continuous reinforcement of communication fundamentals is necessary to maintain improvement.

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COMMUNICATION BEST PRACTICE

- Improved decline in patient satisfaction scores and staff satisfaction

- Increased compliance

GI Outpatient Overall Quality of Care

AIDET Key Drivers

Patient Satisfaction Survey

Comments

- What was the most positive thing about your experience in GI?

- What was the most negative thing about your experience in GI?