Clinical Partners’ Perceptions Of Patient Assignments According To Acuity Level

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Purpose / Objective:
The purpose of this study was to determine Clinical Partners (CPs) perception and satisfaction with patient assignments according to patients’ acuity levels on a 36 bed telemetry unit.

Background / Significance:
Allocation of patients to the CPs was identified as a major issue on the floor. CPs felt that the system of assigning patients was unfair and not transparent.

Methodology / Data Analysis:
A convenience sample of 25 CPs assigned to the floor during the preliminary pre-intervention survey was used, 27 at the Interim Survey, and 32 for the final survey. An intervention tool was designed based on the CPs job description. Duties were grouped using the acronym TEAMS - Treatments, Education, ADLs, Medications and Vital Signs; needs were further divided into sub-groups - high, medium and low demands; and the Patient Assignment Whiteboard was modified to reflect a color-coded acuity system. The objective was to improve CP satisfaction by allocating patient workload evenly without compromising patient safety.

Findings / Implications:
CPs polled in the pre-survey, 68% of them preferred to have patients assigned based on acuity, 17 responders in the interim survey were 100% in agreement and the final survey revealed that 62% strongly agreed with the program. Spearman’s rho was used to assess the relationship between the ranked variables for the final survey. For example, the CP assignments according to patients’ acuity levels have been fair, showed a strong, positive relationship with patients have benefited from CP assignments that were done according to the acuity level of the patient, r=.523, n=26, p=.006.

Discussion:
With the impact of accelerating admissions to medical surgical floors, as well as decreasing financial and time resources, prevention and alleviation of job dissatisfaction are paramount in the healthcare system. The findings of this study clearly indicate that using an acuity system in the allocation of patients to CPs is integral to improve job satisfaction without compromising patient safety.

Conflict of Interest:
I have no conflicts financial or otherwise, related to this abstract/presentation.
I confirm that the above disclosure is accurate and complete: Edwina Forges RN