Evidence-Based Practice

Therefore reducing the phenomenon of ED overcrowding can effectively reduce the patient's length of stay in the Emergency Department RN's and staff to improve the quality of care delivered. Results in decrease patient satisfaction. Increase stress in staff.

Statistics over 10 years
- 23% – 26% growth in ED visits
- 15% decrease in total number of ED's
- 62% of ED’s operate at or over capacity

PICO - Objectives

Compile recommendations from the data for operational improvements and interventions for Emergency Department RN’s and staff to effectively reduce the patient’s length of stay therefore reducing the phenomenon of ED overcrowding.

To identify general themes and common barriers to decreasing patient length of stay and reduce overcrowding in the Emergency Department
To present findings to the Director and Chief Nursing Officer
To identify general themes and common barriers to decreasing patient length of stay and reduce overcrowding in the Emergency Department
To perform an integrative literature review to look at every step of the ED process. These initiatives can then be implemented with operational and organizational modifications and policy change.

Purpose - Background

Emergency Department Overcrowding
- Demand exceed available resources
- Multi-faceted problem
- ED overcrowding is anything that:
  - Impedes the flow through the department
  - Affects the quality of care delivered
  - Results in decrease patient satisfaction
  - Increase stress in staff

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Compile recommendations from the data for operational improvements and interventions for Emergency Department RN’s and staff to effectively reduce the patient’s length of stay therefore reducing the phenomenon of ED overcrowding.

To review current processes in the Emergency Department and reduce overcrowding . In addition these changes can save a substantial amount of time, decrease instances of poor care, and improve patient satisfaction.

To review current processes in the Emergency Department and adapt research and quality improvement initiatives

Model

Rosswurm and Larrabee’s Model for Change to Evidence-Based Practice
- This theory was used to present a model for nurses and other healthcare professionals to change to evidence-based practice guidelines.
- Practitioner's are guided through the entire process of developing and integrating evidence-based practice change.

Literature Review

Causes of ED overcrowding
- Increases in ED patient census
- Influenza outbreak
- Lack of prevention or primary care
- Shortage of community care (home, sub-acute, long term care)
- Slow throughput of patients
- Nursing and staff shortages
- High patient acuity
- Lack of inpatient beds
- Insufficient ED space
- Medical record documentation requirements
- Delays in laboratory and radiographic studies
- Problems with language or cultural barriers
- Unavailability of specialty consultation
- Slow or incompatible information systems
- Financial incentives to fill available beds with admissions
- Lack of funding for EMTALA mandated care
- Closure or decreased hours of other hospitals and community services
- Incentives to keep occupancy rates high

Implementation

Fixing the overcrowding phenomenon in the Emergency Department is a complex but impossible task. This can be done by effectively decreasing the length of stay in the Emergency Department. Implementing the suggested quality improvement initiatives will affect three different areas in the ED process; input, throughput and output. A multi-disciplinary task force will be created to look at every step of the ED process. These initiatives can then be implemented with operational and organizational modifications and policy change.

Implementing a combination of these changes can thereby reduce length of stay and decrease overcrowding . In addition these changes can save a substantial amount of time, decrease instances of poor care, and improve patient satisfaction.

Solutions to ED overcrowding
- Improved triage system
- Streamline registration
- Computerized discharging
- Create/ Increase Urgent care
- Increase ED beds / hospital capacity
- Create overflow units – don’t board patients in ED
- Change admitting patterns
- Create a back up plan for emergency situations
- Use of standing orders and evidence based protocols
- Improve and add ED resources
  - Pharmacist, EKG tech, transport, EMT’s, customer services, clerical staff, admission / discharge coordinator
  - NP’s & PA’s for less acute patients
- Improve on morale and foster the nursing culture
- Improve Education
- Provide alternatives for Primary Care
- Prevent disease and Injury

Summary

There are numerous reasons behind the phenomenon of emergency department overcrowding with a multitude of solutions. With the use of an evidence-based practice model, the ED can find various ways to make operational improvements to reduce the length of stay and effectively decrease the overcrowding problem. This will in turn improve the flow through the ED, improve patient care, and improve patient and staff satisfaction.

References


