Discharge Summary Compliance Rates at a University-Based Hospital in Kingston, Canada

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Introduction

- Discharge summaries are a vital component of both a patient's record and a means of communication between hospital physicians and primary care providers.
- Discharge summaries for the Department of Psychiatry at Kingston General Hospital are required to be completed and signed off by hospital physicians within 72 hours of a patient's discharge.
- This is important for timely routing to the primary care provider as well as communication among specialists involved in patient care.
- Currently, hospital policy dictates that for accreditation an 80% compliance rate is considered optimal.
- This policy is practiced across all specialties within Kingston General Hospital.
- It has been known that Psychiatry compliance rates have fallen below this optimal rate in the past.
- The Information Technology department at Kingston General Hospital records the compliance rates of discharge summary completion.

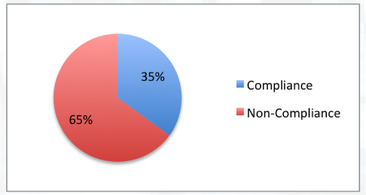
Objectives

- Determine the compliance rate of discharge summaries completed within 72 hours of discharge within the Department of Psychiatry at Kingston General Hospital.
- Determine the barriers to compliance if the rate is below 80%.
- Determine which interventions may be suitable to increase compliance rate.

Materials & Methods

- Obtain the data for compliance rates from the Information Technology Department.
- Hold focus groups within the Department of Psychiatry Quality Improvement Committee to determine barriers to compliance.
- Discuss with hospital staff physicians and allied health staff which barriers are most influential to completion within 72 hours.
- Implement interventions as determined by focus groups and discussions for quality improvement and improved patient care.

Results



Interventions

- Involve the residents of the inpatient unit to discuss and create a template for ease of discharge summary completion.
- Inpatient psychiatry staff physicians were asked to approve the discharge summary template and e-discharge interface.
- Residents, staff physicians, nurses and other allied health staff were asked for input into both the template and e-discharge interface.
- Emails will be sent to both residents and staff physicians in order to make them aware of poor compliance.
- Residents have been asked to complete discharge summaries at the time of patient discharge so that staff may have 72 hours to sign off the summary.
- The Information Technology department at Kingston General Hospital was contacted to change the interface of the e-discharge summary for ease of use (this will be completed in December 2016).
- Staff physicians will receive their individual compliance data for review as well as after all interventions are completed.

Conclusions & Recommendations

- The Department of Psychiatry has a compliance rate of 35% compared to 80% required as per hospital policy.
- Interventions proposed may help to improve these compliance rates in the future.
- A future audit of compliance rates will be conducted after all interventions have been implemented.
- Focus groups may be held in the future to determine barriers if still present after the current interventions have been conducted.

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