Nurse-Physician Collaboration

A study into how effective communication increases the quality of care for patients
The Problem

Nurse – Physician Communication affects patient safety.$^1$
2008 Survey²

- 26% of Nurses were dissatisfied with the Nurse – Physician Relationship.
- 46% felt subordinate to physicians.
- 70% said physicians don’t understand their roles and responsibilities.
- ~60% say that physicians don’t communicate with them about concerns for their patients.
- ~50% said that physicians don’t listen to what they have to say about patients.
Goal of the Health Care Environment

To become a workplace of teamwork and collaboration between different professional disciplines in order to promote an environment of safe, quality care for the patient being served.
Barriers to Effective Communication

- Increased workload
- Healthcare teams are increasingly fragmented into sub-specialties
- Differing perceptions and language
- Prior Experience
Improving Relationships with Physician

- Workplace empowerment for nurses
- Nurse/physician rounds
- Team meetings
- Collaborative Educational programs
- Collaborative Membership on hospital Committees
Improving Relationship with Nurses

- Provide rationale when changing plan of care.
- Discuss the plan of care daily.
- Trust the nurses’ judgment.
- Demonstrate respect by not criticizing or questioning the nursing care of the patient in front of the patients, family member or to other nurses.
- Provide clear communication when giving a verbal or telephone order and allow time for read-back.
- Address each nurse by her/his name and title.
Communication

What it is….

• A culture of mutual respect
• Actively Listening
• Participating

What it isn’t….

• Yelling
• Cursing
• Ignoring or Condescension
Communication

Universally, if communication is poor, there is not one medical or nursing specialty or practice environment that is immune to error. Collaborative clinicians, nurses and physicians, are essential to the coherent, comprehensive exchange of information.
Practical Points to Consider when Communicating with Physicians

• Recognize your own emotional state and take stock.

• Attempt to understand and acknowledge the receiver's perspective.

• Questioning of your information is not personal but fact gathering.

• Decide what you want to achieve from the call.

• How urgent is the matter?

• Prepare your case.
Practical Points Continued

- Contact the right person the first time.
- Anticipate—what information will the physician need to make a decision?
- Have a structure: SBAR
- Be your patient’s advocate and use assertiveness appropriately.
- Don’t accept bullying
Communication Tools

◆ Phones
◆ Pagers
◆ Face to Face discussion
◆ SBAR (situation, background, assessment, recommendations)
◆ Health Care Documentation
Professional Inequality²

Nurses address physicians by their title.
Physicians address nurses by their first name.
Consider returning to the use of title for nurses creating a more formal culture resulting in greater civility in nurse/physician relationships.
References


