



Breakdowns in Communicating a Patient's Wishes: A Quality Improvement Project to Standardize Documentation and Communication of Patients' Goals of Care

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Background

- Understanding a patient's goals of care (GOC) are key to providing quality care
 - Requires time, discussion, trust, and nuance to elicit
 - Documentation is not always clear
- Modern medicine is often fractured with many different teams caring for a patient
 - Handoffs are common and are known to be at risk for breakdowns in communication
- This project sought to better understand how goals of care are communicated by providers and to improve and standardize GOC documentation

Methods

Hypothesis: increasing awareness of the Advance Care Planning (ACP) note type would improve GOC documentation.

Intervention: Residents were provided with information about this note type and a goal to use it for documenting GOC during quality improvement day, during educational conferences, and via email.

Data Analysis:

Pre-Intervention Survey: August 2019

- Internal medicine residents (111 of 175 responded, 63%)
- qualitative and quantitative data about institutional goals of care practices

Post-Intervention Survey - June/July 2020

- Internal Medicine Residents (49 of the same 175 responded, 28%)
- Again collected qualitative and quantitative data surrounding institutional approaches to goals of care elucidation and documentation

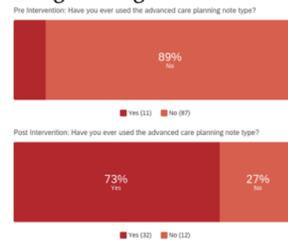
Pre- and post-intervention retrospective chart reviews of patients admitted to our medical intensive care unit who had a code status order other than "Full Code."

Variables collected:

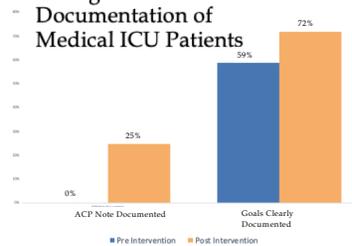
- Clear documentation of the patient's goals of care in the chart narrative (assessed by look through admission note, progress notes, and consult notes)
- Presence of an ACP note documenting GOC

Quantitative Survey Results

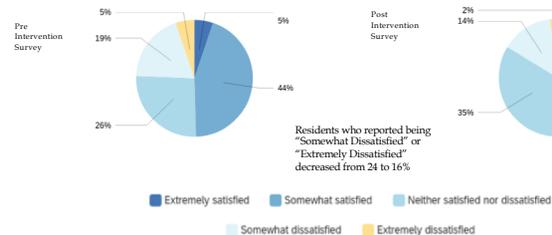
Advanced Care Planning Note Usage Change



Change in Documentation of Medical ICU Patients



How satisfied are you with verbal and written communication regarding patients' goals of care?



Qualitative Survey Results

"Describe your current use of ACP notes"

- "...It is helpful because you can look through for a specific note type rather than digging through progress notes to look for documentation of these discussions."
- "LOVE IT!! I use it all the time!"
- "Useful for overnight cross cover and times when transferring care between teams, to help keep track of what has been done before."

Discussion

Limitations/Cofounding Issues

- COVID 19 Pandemic was in the middle of our survey
- National increased awareness of importance of goals of care conversations
- Timing in the academic year; early versus late
- Poor response rate in follow up (approximately 50% of initial survey)

Conclusions

- Promoting use of a separate note type correlated with an increased frequency of that note types use, as well as clarity of goals of care documentation
- Uptake in ACP notes, from 0% to 25%, coincided with an improvement in goals of care clarity
- Residents had improved perception of communication regarding goals of care
- When an ACP note was completed, it provided a clear resource for any provider to assess in the chart

Further work is needed to increase use and to continue to assess the relevance to providers