

## Knowledge is Key: Patient Education Survey on General Medical Units

A 39-item questionnaire evaluating patient education practice was distributed to 8 general medical units in September of 2005. 52 Registered Nurses participated in the survey.

The survey evaluated staff's ability to:

- Assess patient learning needs
- Access and use on-line patient education resources
- Evaluate patient understanding of what was taught
- Document what was taught
- Have self confidence and skill in teaching

Once the data was collected, educational in-services were provided over a 15 month period focusing on how to access various on-line patient education resources available at Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH).

The on-line patient education resources that were focused on included:

Micromedex CareNotes (comprehensive patient education document database)

MGH Discharge Documents (inpatient proprietary content)

MGH Patient and Family Learning Center Website (PFLC)

MGH Patient Education TV Channel (list of over 200 educational videos)

MGH Cancer Resource Room

MGH Hospital Drug Formulary Database LexiPALS

MGH Primary Care Office Insite (PCOI: Outpatient proprietary content)

The survey was repeated in March 2007 on the 8 general medical units using the same instrument. 56 Registered Nurses responded to the survey.

The data revealed a substantial increase in the knowledge and usage of the available patient education resources. CareNotes, which offers over 3,500 patient education handouts in English and Spanish, usage increased as much as 50%. LexiPals, which offers medication information in 18 different languages, usage also increased 50%.

The use of these resources will help nurses re-enforce their teachings to patients and their families. It is hoped that using these additional resources will improve a patient's health outcome and prevent complications.

The survey also identified areas of practice that need improvement, particularly related to assessing patient learning. Based on this initial data, a plan was developed to implement the survey to all 4,000 employees within Patient Care Services. An electronic survey was distributed in the summer of 2008. Data is presently being evaluated.

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