Implementation of a Daily Safety Huddle in a 219-bed Military Hospital

Hansen, Konni; Eccleston, Sarah; Sartori, Deborah, Madigan Army Medical Center; Tacoma, WA

**Purpose:** To enhance the communication between multidisciplinary staff to improve patient outcomes and decrease time to resolution of safety, quality, or service-related issues within the organization.

**Background/Significance:** Madigan Army Medical Center did not have a daily multidisciplinary huddle focused on safety. Safety, quality, or service-related issues were reported by department in an email format, or up through the chain of command. Issues that involved multiple areas and teams often took weeks or months to communicate and resolve. Situational awareness of safety and quality concerns throughout the hospital were difficult for leadership to determine.

**Description:** In December of 2014, the hospital piloted the Safety Stoplight meeting for the nursing department; this meeting was focused on reporting safety, quality, or service-related issues to nursing leadership. As the benefits of the safety huddle were recognized, the team expanded to include multidisciplinary services and leadership throughout the organization. The safety huddle currently consists of a 15-minute brief where leaders report significant patient and staff safety, quality, and service-related concerns. There is no attempt to solve the issues during the safety huddle. Immediately following the meeting, small informal working groups come together to discuss the issues that directly involve their areas or with which they can provide assistance in the resolution of the reported issue.

**Evaluation and Outcomes:** The Safety Stoplight has allowed leadership throughout the hospital to have a quick overview of safety, quality, and service concerns in a face-to-face format that increases communication, transparency, and collaboration throughout the hospital. Multiple issues have been resolved more quickly than in the past, with less time wasted as the issue sat unheeded in an inbox or work queue. Since the implementation of the safety huddle, a daily 1 to 2 hour meeting was replaced by the 15 minute huddle on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Fridays.

**Conclusions:** Currently, the team is in the process of collecting data regarding the outcomes of the Safety Stoplight. Preliminary results indicate a decrease in the length of time required to report and resolve safety and service related concerns. Leadership has also reported a perception of improved satisfaction with communication and increased transparency between multidisciplinary teams throughout the hospital.

**Contact:** onni.l.hansen.mil@mail.mil