



Development of Nursing Standards Operating Procedures (SOP's) for Ward Management Practices: An Initiative towards Quality Assurance

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Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration among all authors. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

This research will explore the experiences and meanings that nurses have about attending and caring for patients with protocols of care, their advantages and disadvantages. Any quality assurance initiative must start by developing customised standard operating procedures (SOPs). The creation of institutional SOPs requires staff participation, ongoing support, and mentoring. This study was conducted with the aim of improving processes in a healthcare institution by developing a Nursing care Standard Operating Procedures (SOP's) in a tertiary care medical college hospital in northern India. These SOPs will serve as a tool to assess performance and implement corrective measures in the hospitals to guarantee the consistency of the care provided by each staff member in each ward area.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Quality [1] is a buzz word in modern healthcare organizations and it is the core and most important aspect of services rendered at any healthcare facility. In developing countries like India, It is still limited to the corporate hospitals and in private owned hospitals. With the implementation of National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) [2] in April 2005, the word quality came into the services delivery of healthcare but still in its infancy.

As quality guru Joseph Juran [3] describe “quality as “FIT for USE” indicates that the success and failure of any service /product could be measured through its fitment in the systems/ customer base”. “Healthcare is a complex matrix system in which simple intervention could affect the outcome” [4]. According to Donabedian [5] model, “in every quality initiative the basis is the structures, processes and the outcomes or inputs, processes and the output. The output or the efficiency always depends upon inputs and the processes. The Structures or inputs are an expensive affairs, as they are resource demanding (resources are always limited in any organization)”. The primary focus for improving the output should be on the processes improvement. In process improvement, one needs the organizational involvement in creating their own standards operating procedures (SOP's). This study was conducted with the aim of improving processes in a healthcare institution by developing a working Nursing care Standard operating procedures (SOP's) in a tertiary care medical college hospital in northern India. This study will examine how nurses perceive attending to and caring for patients using protocols of care, as well as their benefits and drawbacks. Additionally, to comprehend the

meanings and experiences of nurses and to determine potential improvements to care strategies. Even after the study is over, participant and institutional names will remain confidential. Any participant who requests that some of his statements be removed will have them removed.

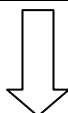
2. METHODOLOGY

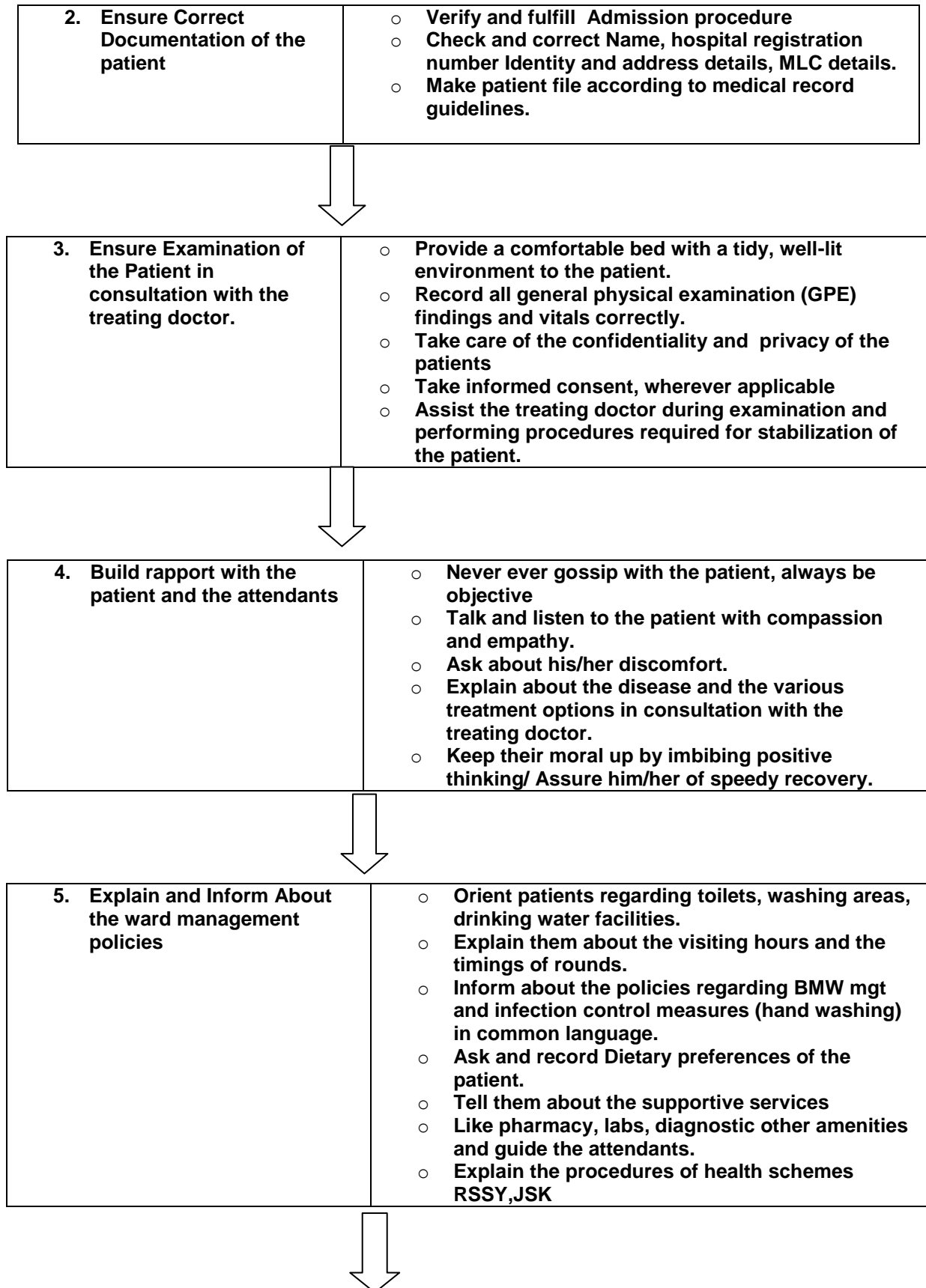
The study includes the nursing staff of 14 ward areas of the hospital. A team under the leadership of the author with 3 senior nursing staff was constituted. They were explained by the author about the importance of standard operating procedures in the ward areas. It was decided that Senior nursing staff will explain about this initiative to all the ward sisters and they subsequently to all the staff nurses. After informing and involving everyone in the process, it was decided by the team that every nursing staff in each ward area will generate its own Do's list they practice in their day-to-day patient care. They submit in 10 days. 31 ward sisters complied and submit 400 Statements (each list comprising 10-15 statements. Then, the author and 3 senior sister/Senior Sisters read each and every statement and shortlist 200 statements. Then, the author thoroughly assess each and every statement and construct 14 standards and 70 objective creterias. Then, it was send/sent to 3 independent experts in the field and they cut down 3 standards and add 1. The author again discuss/discussed with the team members and finally 7 standards and 31 objective Checklist were finalized (Table 1). Then, this version again display in the wards and suggestions/corrections and rectifications were invited from all nursing staff. Thereafter, minor corrections were made and SOP's were approved and accepted for implementation.

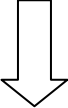
3. RESULTS

Table 1. Nursing Standard operating procedures (SOP's) and checklist for patient care in hospital wards

Standard	Objective checklist
1. Greet patient with a Smile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Introduce yourself to the patient. ○ Don't Panic, Make him/her comfortable in the environment. ○ Provide psychological support.





<p>6. Ensure timely and error free administration of the medicines with proper recording in the charts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Keep your emergency tray always ready, check for expiry dates of the drugs. ○ Administer prescribed medicine with appropriate dosing and timings to the patient. ○ Never ever allow trainees to do so without supervision. ○ See for any adverse reaction.
	
<p>7. Effective discharge of the patient</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Give patient small health talk on his/her disease condition. ○ Explain the dosing, frequency of the medicines prescribed. ○ Advise the modified dietary habits if any. ○ Specifically tell about the follow up and its frequency. ○ Help them to clear their hospital dues.

4. DISCUSSION

As Aristotle said “Quality is not an act but a habit. Ensuring standard practices and adherence to standards, changing behavior and attitude of the staff is not an easy task. It needs rigorous monitoring tools, continuous support and engagement of the staff and most importantly the ownership of the staff working at the facility for implementation and sustainability of the effort. A quality based approach helps in identifying the gaps in service delivery and tracing the roots and linking them with organizational processes. The protocols emerge as a quality strategy, due to the constant scientific advances that make medicine continually define what is scientifically correct, and not just protocols, also clinical guidelines, algorithms and consensus [6]. All these tools have the objective of improving health quality and standardizing health practices, in such a way that acting outside of these norms may, in principle, constitute an infringement of what is called *lex scientiae* [7]. These tools are for caring but not essentially caring. These tools, initially, was developed for patient benefit, but now they could be used as institutional policy, to inform insurance coverage, for deriving quality of care criteria, and for medicolegal liability standards [8,9,10]

5. CONCLUSION

This SOP's will act as a tool to measure the performance and take corrective actions in the hospitals. Once it will implement in letter and spirit, it will ensure the uniformity of the care by

each staff member, in every ward area of the hospital. It will enhance the effectiveness of day-to-day monitoring of processes followed in the hospital wards. This will pave the way towards quality assurance in public healthcare settings.

CONSENT

As per international standard or university standard, patient(s) written consent has been collected and preserved by the author(s).

ETHICAL APPROVAL

As per international standard or university standard written ethical approval has been collected and preserved by the author(s).

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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