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The perfect handover: an innovative approach to report the impact of a combined handover process on inpatient wards in the United Kingdom – a quasi-experimental study

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An innovative new handover system has been designed, trialled, and rolled-out across Epsom and St. Helier NHS Trust, leading to significant improvements for staff and patients. Called the 'Perfect Handover', the initiative has contributed to staff feeling safer, more time given to this important process as well as patients being involved in care and important documents being checked. The system, which combines both a safety huddle and a bedside handover for the first time in the UK, facilitates excellent documented communication to reduce patient risk factors. The underpinning training, resources and support have been vital to its successful delivery and subsequent positive feedback from staff and patients. Clinical handovers can be defined as the transfer of responsibility and accountability from one health care professional to another to enable good care of the patient (Australian Medical Association, 2006). Structured observations and interviews were undertaken on 28 inpatient wards (n=84) and the results were analysed and reported on, this showed we needed to implement the standardized handovers across all inpatient areas to ensure compliance and patient safety. The new system was implemented on inpatient wards within the Trust and this implementation was supported and staff listened to in all areas. Quantitative data was analysed in this research and the data was Quasi experimental in design. All RN working on the inpatient wards were involved in this process. The findings showed significant difference in five out of the eight questions asked. Some more work is being completed when considering areas of little or no significant change. But it is recognised that the changes have made a significant difference to both staff and patients. The Perfect handover was developed by merging two concepts together back in August 2015: the Safety Huddle, and the Bedside Handover.

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