Barriers to Real-Time Charting and the Electronic Health Record

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Background
• The Institute of Medicine (IOM) recognized the potential that technology had for transforming healthcare, and encouraged the innovation of new technologies to reduce errors (IOM, 2000).
• Nursing documentation with the electronic health record (EHR) was theorized to improve patient care and processes with improved standardization, accuracy, and care (Kunz, 2010).
• Accurate clinical documentation required for reimbursement. Core measures require items to be documented within a certain period of time for maximum reimbursement (Keepnews, 2013)
• Nursing perceptions of electronic documentation ➔ Positives: Increased access, efficiency, and organization of charting; Negatives: Slow work, decreases critical thinking and quality of care (Kossman & Scheidenhelm, 2008).
• Barriers to EHR real-time charting ➔ Chaotic nursing pace, ad-hoc workarounds, lack of equipment, poor understanding of point-of-care charting (Kohle-Ersher, Chahterjee, Osimanbeyoglu, Hochheiser, & Bartos, 2012).

Methods
• 10 question survey, developed from literature and observational analysis, directed to bedside RNs & APRNs who chart electronically
• Survey included two free-text questions asking nursing to describe barriers to real-time documentation and suggestions to make it easier
• Survey sent via Survey Monkey by word of mouth in two acute care facilities; relayed to colleagues via email and social media
• 261 surveys were completed and returned
• Results were received in an Excel spreadsheet format, and then uploaded into SPSS for analysis

Purpose and Goals
The purpose of this project was to:
• Assess the perceived importance of real-time charting to patient care in the EHR
• Assess the occurrence of real-time charting in the EHR
The goals of this project were to:
• Determine barriers for real-time charting in the EHR
• Identify recommendations to improve the occurrence of real-time charting in the EHR

Results:
There was a consistent message that nurses felt electronic health records improved nursing and patient care. Nurses relayed the importance of documenting in real-time, but more than half of the respondents (n=261) relayed they did not consistently chart in real time. Better access and improved workflow were ranked as needed solutions.

Conclusion
• Nurses will be part of the solution
• Indices, such as the Rothman & APACHE, depend on smart systems and real-time nurse documentation. Nurses need to be educated on:
  • Improved patient outcomes from real-time charting
  • Shift away from task centered care
  • Prioritization and time management skills
• Innovative technology is available to assist with real time documentation, it must be adopted by hospital systems.
• Staff and resources cannot be cut as they perform more complicated real-time computer documentation.
• Collaborative relationships must be built with nursing schools to engrain practices of real-time documentation in a rapidly changing electronic world. This has been done in social media through venues such as Twitter & Facebook.

References:

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