EARLY WARNING SIGNS: IMPROVES PATIENT SAFETY AND HEALTHCARE OUTCOMES IN KPJ RAWANG SPECIALIST HOSPITAL

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Promoting Patient Engagement towards Patient Safety.

Introduction

To ensure patient safety and well-being is not just a responsibility, but a shared goal. From January 2022 to August 2023 KPJ Rawang Specialist Hospital (KRSH) had experienced a total number of 45 inpatient Code Blue announcement. The management is trying to reduce the gaps by involving patient and family in recognizing early warning sign.

The goal is to ensure active involvement and engagement of patients in their own healthcare journey (World Health Organization, 2021). Patient safety is a paramount concern in healthcare, and one crucial aspect of ensuring it is early detection and response to warning signs of health issues (Ocloo, Garfield, Franklin, & Dawson, 2021).

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Suggestions

1. Healthcare providers should educate patients and families about common early warning signs. This can be done through brochures, posters, and one-on-one health education during admission to ward.
2. Use visual aids and encourage patients to ask questions to ensure they comprehend the information.
3. Encourage open communication and address patients' concerns to alleviate anxiety.
4. Build trust through clear communication, transparency, and consistency in care. Encourage patients to be active participants in their care decisions.
5. Include caregivers in educational sessions and provide them with the necessary information to assist patients effectively.
6. Advocate for systemic changes that prioritize patient engagement, care coordination, and the timely response to early warning signs.

Barriers

1. **Lack of Awareness:** Many patients are not aware of the early warning signs of potential health issues or complications.
2. **Time Constraints:** Healthcare providers often have limited time during admission, making it difficult to thoroughly discuss and educate early warning signs.
3. **Cultural & Language:** Cultural and language differences can hinder patient understanding and engagement.
4. **Trust Issues:** Patients may not trust healthcare providers or the healthcare system, leading to reluctance in engaging with early warning signs.
5. **Caregiver Support:** Patients may rely on caregivers who may not be adequately trained or informed about early warning signs.

Facilitators

1. **Effective Communication:** Healthcare professionals should communicate in a language that patients can understand, avoiding medical jargon. Encourage patients to ask questions and express concerns.
2. **Health Literacy**: Address health literacy challenges by assessing patients' understanding of their conditions and providing tailored education. Use visual aids, videos, brochures and posters to enhance comprehension.
3. **Shared Decision-Making:** Involve patients in healthcare decisions, especially those related to their safety and early warning signs. Collaboratively develop care plans and treatment goals that align with the patient's values and preferences.
4. **Family and Caregiver Engagement:** Involve family members and caregivers in the education and awareness process. They can play a critical role in helping patients to recognize early warning signs and call nurse immediately.

Possible Outcomes

1. **Early Detection of Health Issues:** This early detection can lead to quicker intervention and treatment, potentially preventing the progression of illnesses.
2. **Reduced Adverse Events:** Increased patient engagement can help reduce adverse events such as medication errors, hospital-acquired infections, and falls.
3. **Improved Communication:** Patients who feel empowered to ask questions and express their concerns are more likely to receive appropriate care and information
4. **Cost Savings:** Preventing adverse events can lead to cost savings for both patients and healthcare systems. Fewer complications mean fewer resources spent on treating those complications
5. **Positive Impact on Public Health:** When a significant portion of the population is engaged in their healthcare and aware of early warning signs, there is the potential for broader public health benefits as well.

Conclusion

Patient engagement plays a pivotal role in this process, as informed and engaged patients are more likely to recognize and communicate their symptoms promptly. This proactive approach not only enhances patient safety but also leads to better healthcare outcomes.

In summary, promoting patient engagement in recognizing and responding to early warning signs requires a multifaceted approach that addresses both individual and systemic barriers. Healthcare providers should tailor their strategies to the unique needs and challenges of their patient population to improve patient safety.

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