

21st International Conference on

Clinical and Experimental Cardiology

November 06-07, 2017 | Las Vegas, USA

Developing a guideline driven provider-to-provider handoff tool for heart failure patients

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The American Heart Association (AHA) and Heart Failure Society of America's (HFSA) guideline for Management of Heart Failure in Skilled Nursing Facilities acknowledged poor communication from hospitals to skilled nursing facilities (SNF) as a barrier to optimal heart failure (HF) management. The purpose of this pilot study was to improve adherence to guideline directed HF care in SNFs through enhanced communication between hospital HF specialists and providers at SNFs. Twenty-one patient discharges were evaluated in the study. Follow up phone calls were made to SNF staff nurse within 48 hours of hospital discharge to determine adherence to guideline directed HF care. A mixed methodology approach was used to evaluate qualitative and quantitative data. The transition of care and communication process between hospital HF specialists and providers at SNFs was evaluated using Donabedian's Structure Process and Outcomes Model. Chi-square analysis determined there was no statistically significant difference between adherence to guideline directed HF care in SNFs and the use of a HF specific handoff tool. However, there was a statistically significant difference in adherence to 2-liter fluid restriction ($p=.011$) and daily weights ($p=.025$) for patients who were discharged to a SNF with a completed discharge summary. Furthermore, follow up phone calls made to SNFs resulted in a reduction of 22 HF order-transcription errors. None of the patients in the study were readmitted to the discharging hospital within 30 days. Future research should be conducted with a larger sample size to evaluate the impact of follow up phone calls, standardized HF discharge summaries, and collaboration with multidisciplinary HF clinics on outcomes for HF patients who are discharged to SNFs.

Biography

Nicole Dellise is a board certified family Nurse Practitioner and received her Doctor of Nursing Practice degree from Belmont University. She has cared for heart failure patients for over eight years and is a certified heart failure nurse. She serves as a peer reviewer for a reputed heart failure journal and continues to practice as an advanced practice nurse in the area of heart failure.

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