

Integrating Nursing Informatics to Improve Patient-Centered Care: A Project to Reduce Patient Waiting Time at the Blood Pressure Counter

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Abstract : Background: The ability to provide immediate medical service in outpatient departments is one of the keys to patient satisfaction. Objectives: This project used electronic equipment to integrate nursing care information to patient care at a blood pressure diagnostic counter. Through process reengineering, the average patient waiting time decreased from 35 minutes to 5 minutes, while service satisfaction increased from a score of 2.7 to 4.6. Methods: Data was collected from a local hospital in Southern Taiwan from a daily average of 2,200 patients in the outpatient department. Previous waiting times were affected by (1) space limitations, (2) the need to help guide patient mobility, (3) the need for nurses to appease irate patients and give instructions, (4), the need for patients to replace lost counter tickets, (5) the need to re-enter information, (6) the replacement of missing patient information. An ad hoc group was established to enhance patient satisfaction and shorten waiting times for patients to see a doctor. A four step strategy consisting of (1) counter relocation, (2) queue reorganization, (3) electronic information integration, (4) process reengineering was implemented. Results: Implementation of the developed strategy decreased patient waiting time from 35 minutes to an average of 5 minutes, and increased patient satisfaction scores from 2.7 to 6.4. Conclusion: Through the integration of information technology and process transformation, waiting times were drastically reduced, patient satisfaction increased, and nurses were allowed more time to engage in more cost-effective services. This strategy was simultaneously enacted in separate hospitals throughout Taiwan.

Keywords : process reengineering, electronic information integration, patient satisfaction, patient waiting time

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