

Consultation Time and Its Impact on Length of Stay in the Emergency Department

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Abstract : Introduction/ background: Consultation in the Emergency Department constitute a major part of the work flow every day. Any delay in the consultation process have a major impact on the length of stay and patient disposition and thus affect the total waiting time of patients in the ED. King Fahad medical City in Riyadh City, Saudi Arabia is considered a major Tertiary hospital where there is high flow of patients of different categories visiting the ED. The importance of decreasing consultation time and decision for final disposition of patients was recognized and interpreted in this project to find ways to improve the patient flow in the department and thus the total patient disposition and outcome. Aim / Objectives: 1. To monitor the time of consultation for patients in the Emergency department and its impact on the length of stay of patients in the ED. 2. To detect and assess the problems that lead to long consultation times in the ED, and reach a targeted time of 2 hours for final disposition of patients, according to recognized international and our institutional consultation policy, to reach the final goal of decreasing total length of stay and thus improve the patient flow in the ED. Methods: Data was collected retrospectively for a 92 charts of consultations done in the ED over 2 month's period. The data was analyzed to get the median of Total Consultation Time. A survey was conducted among all ED staff to determine the level of knowledge about the total consultation time and the compliance to the institutional policy target of 2 hours. A second Data sample of 168 chart was collected after awareness campaign and education of all ED staff about the importance of reaching the target consultation time and compliance to the institutional policy. Results: We have found that there is room for improvement in our overall consultation time. This was found to be more frequent with certain specialties. Our surveys have showed that many ED staff are not familiar or not compliant with our consultation policy which was not clear for everyone. Post-intervention data have showed that awareness of the importance to decrease the total consultation time and compliance alone to the targeted goal have had a huge impact on overall improvement and decreasing the time of final decision and disposition of the patient and the overall patient length of stay in the ED. Conclusion: Working on improving Consultation time in the Emergency Department is a major factor in improving overall length of stay and patient flow. This improvement helps in the overall patient disposition and satisfaction. Plan: As a continuation of our project we are planning to focus on the conflict of admission cases where more than one specialty is involved in the care of patients. We are planning to collect data on the time it takes to resolve and reach final disposition of those patients, and its impact on the length of stay and our department flow and the overall patient outcome and satisfaction.

Keywords : consultation time, impact, length of stay, in the ED

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