

ACADEMY OF SPINAL CORD INJURY PROFESSIONALS

PURPOSE

Implementing an approach to managing the specific needs of patients with spinal cord injuries (SCI) within an inpatient rehabilitation hospital (IRH) that specializes in a diverse spectrum of medical conditions.

BACKGROUND

Hospitals across the United States were experiencing variable staffing in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, making it challenging to manage individual care plans. Additionally, case conference meetings were time-restricted and structured, limiting collaboration between disciplines. Thus, a SCI-specific interdisciplinary huddle was established to address the unique needs of this population.

OBJECTIVES

- Focus on specific needs of each patient with a SCI and identification of gaps in plan of care.
- Early identification of equipment and assistive technology needs for patients within the IRH environment.
- Enhance alignment of SCI professionals within the patient's care team.

METHODS

- Key leaders were identified to facilitate communication and direct the interdisciplinary huddle process.
- An SCI huddle time was established with key leaders to occur twice a week outside of the scheduled team conference.
- SCI Physician, RN supervisor, SCI educator, and lead therapist worked together to create a communication board for the purpose of the interdisciplinary huddles.
- The communication board is SCI patient specific and addresses the following areas: anticipated discharge date and disposition; neurogenic bowel, bladder and skin management; adaptive equipment; caregiver training; barriers to progress; and assigned primary therapists.
- The communication board is designed to foster communication between key leaders who disseminate details to primary team members in real time.



Spinal Cord Injury Huddle Implementation: A Step Beyond Case Conference



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RESULTS

Implementation of a SCI interdisciplinary huddle with an updated communication board benefits all stakeholders.

- **SCI physician** benefits from timely communication and has improved insight regarding patients' care and progression toward discharge goals.
- **Nursing staff** on all shifts are able to utilize the communication board to obtain a holistic working knowledge of SCI patients. This results in an improved ownership and understanding of how they contribute to reaching patients' goals for discharge.
- **Therapy staff** experiences streamlined communication regarding patient usual performance to allow for continued progression toward patient goals. Huddles provide timely feedback from interdisciplinary staff for comprehensive assessment of carryover.
- **Patient** specific needs are identified early during the rehabilitation stay allowing them to experience maximum benefit from specialty assistive technologies, coordination of family training, and assessment of personal concerns and educational needs.

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