Improving Efficacy and Efficiency of Handover in Acute Care of the Elderly Wards
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Background

Patient handover is an essential part of continuity of care but is also a high risk time where errors occur and information can be missed; an effective handover is vital for patient safety.

Within the Care of the Elderly wards at the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh (RIE), medical handover occurs from the day team to, “on call,” evening team daily on weekdays.

The aim of this project was to optimise this medical handover.

Impact

- 75% of doctors felt the new handover is more efficient and safer.
- Time taken for handover was reduced by 50%.
- 96% of patients were handed over using SBAR after the intervention.
- It was more common to have all evening team members present for the full handover in the new system.

Lessons Learned

Moving to a centralised, protected handover location and time, has significantly improved the efficiency and safety of patient handover in the Care of the Elderly wards in the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh. This change is now being refined with the new junior staff in the unit.

Action

Following an initial survey of all junior medical staff involved in patient handover, interventions were made including:

- A dedicated, centralised location for handover away from the clinical area
- Designated handover time
- Education on the use of SBAR as a handover tool

Two weeks following the implementation of the new handover system, the same junior medical staff completed a further questionnaire regarding handover.