

“The perfect week”: A novel departmental quality improvement initiative

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DOI: 10.24911/SJEMed.72-1710093435



Introduction:

Patient-centered care in the Emergency Department (ED) is an often overseen but critical component of holistic healthcare. ‘The Perfect Week’ was a novel initiative by the ED at Mediclinic City Hospital seeking to explore opportunities to improve patient-centered care at our facility with an emphasis on patient experience.

Objective:

To improve workflow performance, safety, and patient experience through implementation of multifaceted strategies, focused on improvements in workflow, placement, and resource allocation in the ED.

Methods:

The Emergency Department at Mediclinic City Hospital, Dubai initiated a Quality Improvement Project, entitled “The Perfect Week.” Over a period of 7 days, multiple new strategies were implemented including 1) additional staff per shift, 2) placement of a physician in triage (PIT), 3) frequently used medication available in cupboard for STAT orders in triage, 4) setting up a treatment room to expedite orders placed by PIT doctor (“PIT STOP”) prior to shifting to majors area, 5) inter-departmental prioritization of ED order requests, 6) emergency physician in charge (EPIC) to facilitate flow, expedite admissions/discharges and deal with time consuming tasks. During the week-long project, multiple variables were measured, with a specific focus on the following: 1) Time from registration to triage, 2) Time from being triaged to being seen by a doctor, 3) Time from ordering analgesia to execution of order, 4) Time from Trop I sample collected to reaching lab, 5) Time from Trop I reaching lab to preliminary result, 6) Ultrasound turnaround time (TAT), 7) CT scan TAT, 8) ED Length of Stay (LOS), 9) Admission waiting time. Efficiency assessed by measuring the time it took for each variable. Subjective feedback on patient experience measured by means of Google reviews. We compared this week with the previous weeks to assess whether efficiency has improved.

Results:

An overall improvement was noted in all variables measured. Reduced times were noted especially in triage to time seen by doctor (mean reduction time 13 min), Ultrasound TAT (by 8 min), CT scan TAT (by 17 min), ED LOS (by 18 min) and admission waiting time (by 9 min). A total of eighty-two positive Google reviews were received in 1 week, with feedback primarily focused on patients’ reduced length of stay, waiting time, efficiency, and healthcare provider empathy.

Conclusion:

Performance, safety, and patient experience significantly improved during “The Perfect Week” as demonstrated above. Additional staffing, of note, including a PIT, PIT STOP nurse and EPIC, was found to have considerable beneficial impact on patient experience.