

Patient perspectives on medication management during and post-discharge, focusing on opioids: A follow-up interview design

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Introduction

Transitions of care increases the risk of patients experiencing medication management misadventures.¹ Understanding patients' perspectives facilitates effective medication management during and post-discharge and can decrease the incidence of medication-related readmissions.^{2,3}

Aims

To explore patients' perspectives on the adequacy of discharge practice at a major tertiary hospital and its contribution towards effective medication management, focusing on optimised opioid stewardship.

Methods

- Semi-structured telephone interviews with patients commenced on at least one new medication in hospital
- Interview were transcribed verbatim
- Thematic analysis to identify key themes
- Themes were described with de-identified patient examples

Results

- Thirty-four patients participated in interviews; 35% female, mean (range) age 60 (34-88), 65% surgical patients, eight patients (24%) received opioids

Three key themes were identified:

- 1) Impact of poor communication between health professionals on patient care
 - 2) Reasons for a perceived long discharge wait time
 - 3) Opioid Stewardship: supply, adequate pain relief
- 94% felt supported and equipped to manage medications post-discharge
 - 26% experienced a long wait time to discharge
 - 9% experienced communication issues with their healthcare team
 - 88% received enough opioid medication for effective pain management
 - 38% of patients had already obtained another opioid medication prescription 5-8 days post discharge

What patients had to say:

"No issues, but I have missed a morning and night dose since discharge. That's actually pretty good for me...But now I'm very consistent besides the missing doses the other day."

"I stayed overnight because no family member could come and pick me up. So I didn't have the best experience but it's not your fault."

"Yeah I think I got enough I will see the GP soon to get another script. The Palexia® only helps take the edge off it. It's still pretty painful."

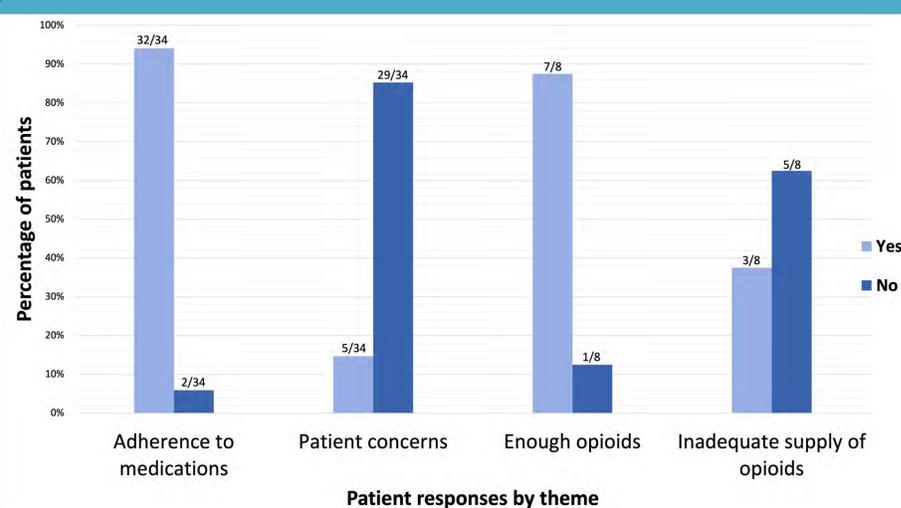


Figure 1: Patient perspectives on the facilitation of medication management provided by the hospital

Conclusion

Patient perspectives suggest that current discharge practices are adequate and facilitates effective medication management. Discharge services could be optimised through improving workflow, medicine supply, and communication.