How can student nurses play a more active role within the MDT in aiding patient recovery under the Rapid Recovery Programme?

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Context and Problem

Context:
The context involves a placement undertaken where we both had the opportunity to see the Rapid Recovery Programme (RRP) in action. That patients undergoing a hip or knee replacement surgery under the RRP be provided with more support and assistance from student nurses who are better informed after attending ‘Joint School’ while on placement on an orthopaedic, surgical and or theatre placement. This will ensure the students have a greater understanding of the importance the programme has and be more able to support patients and play a more active role within the multi-disciplinary team (MDT). Which would then in turn assist the patients on the wards in their recovery and to reduce their length of stay.

Assessment of the Problem:
We discussed what we as student nurses had observed as the benefits of patients undergoing the programme compared to traditional hip or knee surgery. Also what had learned from attending ‘joint school’, observing surgery and caring for patients from pre-operative assessment clinic to discharge. In being better informed, and playing an active role in the patients journey the students could also play another key role as part of the MDT in the patient journey.

Strategy for Change

In having students play a more active role, and learning more about the programme, attending ‘joint school’, learning what patients should expect and how to ensure they are better prepared means that the hospital providing the surgery is able to treat more patients and the turn around is quicker than others. Allowing for more surgery under the scheme and a greater number of patients to be treated. Also by enabling students to play a more active role within the MDT to encourage and support patients in playing an active role in their recovery.

Students should embrace all learning opportunities available whilst on placements to develop their knowledge and understanding which in turn will help their patients well-being and recovery. The programme and their attendance at ‘Joint School’ will enable them to gain a better understanding of the programme and how it affects patients and by having prior knowledge they can better support their patients recovery and progress.

The Patient Perspective

Patients comments include “I have found ‘Joint School’ very informative – and it puts ones mind at ease knowing what to expect” as well as “my friends and family think it is amazing that I was up and about so quickly, having had both knees replaced at the same sitting. It is really great to be no longer restricted in what I do and to enjoy spending active time with my wife, my daughters and my granddaughter. I would recommend it to everyone and would be happy to go through it again, if the benefits were the same.”

Effects of Changes

Students knowledge and understanding of the Rapid Recovery Programme will ensure that patients are assisted by all members of the MDT including student nurses. This will also enhance the work the MDT do and make the students feel like they also play an important role within the MDT.

When they then graduate they should encourage other student nurses to attend ‘Joint School’ and make the most of every learning opportunity to enhance not only their knowledge but to gain a deeper understanding of the patients journey.

The Outcome

Lessons Learnt:
The suggested idea are yet to be fully implemented throughout both hospitals where we had placements. When lessons are learnt and findings available they will be forwarded on to 1000 Lives Plus in order to make this information public, to be attached to our poster.
•Lessons we learnt as student nurses were of seeing the patients journey from pre-operative assessment to their attendance at ‘Joint School’ which made them much better prepared for their surgery.
•Then we saw some of the operations under the programme and continued to follow the patient journey onto the ward.
•We observed their physiotherapy and rehabilitation prior to timely discharge.
•We would like other students to participate in this way, and gain a better understanding of the patient journey and recovery under the programme to be a valuable member of the MDT.

Conclusion:
Our abstract idea came about because of what we as student nurses have seen and participated in and can see the benefits of it. Our hope is that after reading our poster that other health professionals can see the benefits of allowing students to play a role in the Rapid Recovery Programme. As well as encouraging student nurses to also make the most of this remarkable programme to aid their learning and development to provide the best evidence based care to their patients.

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