“Chase CRP”, “Review patient”: Improving the Quality of Out-of-hours Medical Handover at a London Teaching Hospital

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**BACKGROUND**

1. The Royal College of Physicians (RCP) has identified handover as “a major cause of preventable harm” [1] [2].
2. Anecdotal evidence from Charing Cross Hospital suggested that medical out-of-hours handover was poor.
3. Medical SHO surveys: difficulties with prioritising the weekend workload because of inadequate written handover information; this often comprised tasks like “assess fluid balance” with no accompanying clinical context.
4. Medical and ITU registrar discussions: inefficiency when reviewing patients who were unexpectedly acutely unwell out-of-hours because of poor accessibility of up-to-date clinical information; they often have to look through weeks of notes to find this, including ‘ceiling of care’ decisions, while they should be managing the patient.

**HANOVER**

Entries from original handover pro forma (fig.1) were audited against RCP guidelines [1] (n=82) (fig. 2).

- **FRIDAY WR ENTRIES**

  - Friday WR entries for post-acute medical patients were audited against RCP handover guidelines [1] (n=86) (fig. 4, 5).
  - Some notes contained no complete problem list for >2 weeks.

**CONCLUSIONS**

1. The new handover form increased the quality of information that was handed over – “current issues” and “ceiling of care” improved significantly, which junior doctors found beneficial in providing safe cover out-of-hours.
2. Friday WR sheet improved outcomes when used; raising awareness alone did not help. Future work will identify ways of encouraging its use.

**AIMS**

1. Audit weekend handover lists and Friday ward round (WR) entries against RCP guidance [1], to assess the quality of information provided.
2. Implement changes to promote safer, more effective handover.
3. Re-audit following implementation.

**METHODS AND RESULTS**

These are summarised in the timeline below:

**REFERENCES**

[2] Royal College of Physicians, May 2011, Out-of-hours handover. [https://www.rcplondon.ac.uk/sites/default/files/out-of-hours-handover_0.pdf](https://www.rcplondon.ac.uk/sites/default/files/out-of-hours-handover_0.pdf)