

Project Title

Role Redesign of Physiotherapy Therapy Assistants (TAs) in Surgical High
Dependency unit (SHDU)

Project Lead and Members

Tan Ee Chen Jaclyn

Organisation(s) Involved

Tan Tock Seng Hospital

Project Period

Start date: Oct 2016

Completed date: Oct 2017

Aims

To redesign the role of TAs by equipping them with the knowledge and skills to assess (e.g. Pain, complaints, Range-of-motion, muscle strength, Functional mobility) and deliver bedside interventions (e.g. Bed exercises, breathing exercises, incentive spirometry, supported cough) to post- abdominal surgery day 1 patients of the SHDU independently.

Background

- With the rapidly ageing population and the growing burden of chronic diseases in Singapore, there is an increased demand for physiotherapists.
- Unfortunately, looking at the projections from the Ministry of Health, this demand has become increasingly challenging given the shrinking national workforce, persistently low birth rates and controlled access to foreign labour sources.
- Therefore, there is a need to develop sustainable solutions and balance the growing healthcare costs.

- Care and process redesign is crucial in reducing duplicated processes and improving important and necessary processes in the system.
- With these improvement efforts, there can be increased manpower capacity for role enhancement and redesign.
- Traditionally, TAs assist with therapeutic activities. By upskilling the TAs, suitable PT tasks can be delegated to them without compromising care outcomes.

Methods

Steps taken for TA role redesign in SHDU:

- A multi-disciplinary team was formed to develop the TA Clinical Governance Framework, which was endorsed by Tan Tock Seng Hospital Clinical Board.
- Identified scope for independent services by TA
- Developed a 4-week training program (160 hours of lectures, hands-on practical sessions, theoretical exam and competency assessments.)
- Selected therapy assistants based on their interest, area of work and work experience
- Commenced training programme for TA.
- Followed by supervised clinical practice for TA
- Lastly, independent clinical practice for TA.

Results

- With 1 TA trained, there is a manpower savings of 0.25FTE/day, cost savings of \$232/day, and time savings of 120 minutes of physiotherapist time/day.
- No adverse events were reported during this period.
- TAs expressed increased job satisfaction with the enhanced job roles.
- Physiotherapists felt satisfied they could focus on more complex tasks that truly requires one's professional expertise

Lessons Learnt

- It is imperative to set aside dedicated time and attention for training.
- It is essential to have a robust training program
- Consider selecting a TA who has prior experience in the training field so that the training process moves faster.

Conclusion

- Role redesigning demonstrates a range of benefits to the patients, staff and organisation.
- More TAs should be up-skilled to create a skilled and efficient workforce.

Additional Information

Awards:

- Poster Presentation for Singapore Health and Biomedical Congress 2017
- NHG Quality Day 2017

Project Category

Workforce Redesign

Keywords

Workforce Transformation, Job Redesign, Role Redesign, Role Enhancement, Therapist Assistants, Tan Tock Seng Hospital, Workforce Redesign, Care Redesign, Process Redesign, Allied Health, Physiotherapy, Staff Upskilling, Staff Training, Cost Effectiveness, Bedside Physiotherapy Intervention, Multi-Disciplinary, Post-Operation, Surgical High Dependency unit, Post-abdominal Surgery, Clinical Governance Framework, Supervised Clinical Practice, Hands-on Practice, Theoretical Exam, Competency Assessments, Training Programme, Manpower Savings, Cost Savings, No Adverse Events, Job Satisfaction

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