Medication on Wheels Project

Aim
The Medical Transit Unit (MTU) is a 20 bed medical unit located at Camden hospital, South Western Sydney Local Health District. MTU provides services of Slow Stream Rehabilitation and is a transition unit for patients awaiting transfer of care from inpatient to the community.

Essentials of Care (EOC) commenced on MTU in 2010 and through EOC roundings and ward meetings, nursing staff identified an increased number of medication errors and that it was taking a considerable length of time to administer medications. In 2013 the EOC domain of Medications/IV Products was identified as an area where a significant improvement of clinical practice could be made. Using EOC as a platform for quality improvement, the aim of the project was to reduce incidents involving medication administration errors, improve safe delivery of medication and work more efficiently.

Background
Prior to the implementation of the medication trolleys storage and administration of a patient’s medication from their bedside drawer was customary process on MTU. This process of medication administration involved collecting all required medications from impress, for the patient and storing these medications in a locked drawer of the patient’s bedside cupboard. When medications were required for the patient, the nurse would unlock the drawer and administer the medications. Issues that presented from this process were key access, time and restocking.

Interruptions to the process of medication administration also occurred as the nurse administering the medications was often interrupted by patients in the room requiring care, leading to delays in medication administration. These interruptions were frequent, increasing the likelihood of medication errors due to interruptions.

Results / Outcomes
Through feedback and discussions (Claims, Concerns and Issues) in EOC sessions along with staff surveys it was found that the majority of staff felt that new medication trolleys could improve the process of administering medications. Education and training on IMS incident reporting of medication errors were incorporated; staff brainstormed and reviewed the medication policy to develop an action plan to be implemented. Focus on improving safety and efficiency involved when administering medications and recording and evaluating errors and near misses.

MTU was able to trial a medication trolley during a six week period. The feedback from staff during and after this trial period was positive. A reduction in medication administration incidents, time efficiency and staff and patient satisfaction was identified. Through meetings with staff, with key stake holders, the Acting Nurse Unit Manager and Operational Nurse Manager, a cost analysis was conducted for the purchase of two medication trolleys. Finally with the EOC and in partnership with Camden Hospital Auxiliary two trolleys were purchased for use on MTU.

Conclusion
“Medication reportable IMS errors have greatly reduced.”
“Staff satisfaction has increased.”
“New medication trolleys have been implemented.”

Acknowledgement
Elizabeth Kirkpatrick, EOC Facilitator, RN, Kristine Zhao, EOC Facilitator, RN, Christine Montafia, Clinical Nurse Educator, Kim Jarrold, EOC Facilitator, EEN, Lisa Ritchie, Nursing Unit Manager, Katja Schwerin, Operational Nurse Manager, and the Medical Transit Unit team, Melissa Patch Essentials of Care Coordinator/ Nurse Manager, Michelle Joyce, Camden Hospital pharmacy.