Introduction

The care of neurosurgical spine patients often involves a multi-disciplinary team, including neurosurgery residents, hospitalists, nursing staff, and physical/occupational therapists.

Oftentimes, post-op spine patients are on a non-neurosurgical service (hospitalist, MICU/SICU, medicine), who are provided with scant sign out on the procedure(s) performed.

The treatment team(s) that are helping manage patient care post-operatively are often unaware of the procedure performed, and what are the salient clinical signs/symptoms, radiographic findings, and laboratory values that need to be closely monitored.

Methods

A 10-question survey was created and sent to healthcare providers (attendings, residents, and nursing staff from the NICU and INICU at Gibbon) who routinely help care for and help manage spine patients.

The survey was aimed at gauging the level of satisfaction of sign out they receive on post-operative patients, and where they would like to see improvement.

Using the information gathered, a post-op check note template was created for EPIC, which has salient information contained to help improve communication between treatment teams.

This template was evaluated and refined by a multi-disciplinary team, including including neurosurgery residents, Farber hospitalists, and nursing leadership.

Results

A total of 66 healthcare providers completed the 10-question survey that was sent out (6 NICU attendings, 12 Farber Hospitalists, 16 NICU nurses, and 32 INICU spine unit nurses).

How often do you read the post-op check progress notes written for post-op patients by the neurosurgery resident?

How useful do you think it would be if residents wrote a detailed, systems-based post-op note, and would you be inclined to use it as a reference to help guide post-operative care during their hospital stay?

Conclusions

A post-operative note template that includes pertinent sign out items that go beyond only documenting a physical exam will provide better communication between treatment teams, and allow for the early identification and prompt treatment of any post-operative concerns as they may arise.

Future work on this project will involve assessing the degree of compliance by neurosurgical residents in completing post-operative notes on every patient.

Furthermore, another survey will be sent out to assess whether staff have better satisfaction after the implementation of the post-operative note template.