

PDSA Cycle [1]**Aim:** What are you trying to accomplish?

1. Improve the frequency of patient reviews by ensuring that every patient is reviewed every weekday during the data collection period.
2. Increase communication of management plans from primary specialty to both medical and nursing teams by 20% from baseline during the data collection

Plan: What will your test be?

We will implement a communication tool, in the form of a sticker, to be inserted into the patient's medical notes in order to aid communication between the primary specialty and medical team caring for the boarded patient.

We will then evaluate the compliance with sticker use and assess how this intervention affects communication.

Prediction: What do you think will happen as a result of your test?

As a result of using the communication tool, information regarding the management of boarded patients, including outstanding investigations, referrals and discharges will be effectively communicated between teams. This will result in timely investigations and prevent delayed discharges.

Do: What happened when you carried out your test?

Stickers were completed in 93% of instances showing excellent compliance. In 37 out of 42 (88%) patient reviews, the junior doctor was informed of the management plan, and nursing staff were informed in 36 out of 42 (86%) patient reviews. There were four occasions where stickers were not completed, and in one of these occasions the patient required blood tests; however the nursing team were informed of this. The sticker encouraged communication between primary specialty and the ward team.

Study: How did the results of your test compare with predictions?

Our results far exceeded our expectations as there was excellent compliance with the use of stickers and this resulted in enhanced communication between teams, thereby potentially improving patient care.

Act: How will you change your previous test in light of what you have learned?

The stickers were a success and proved to be an excellent communication tool. In order to improve sustainability and reliability of sticker use, we will encourage the primary specialty to be responsible for the insertion of stickers into medical notes as part of their daily practice.

PDSA Cycle [2]**Aim:** What are you trying to accomplish?

1. Implement a sustainable communication tool, i.e. stickers, for all boarded patients in our surgical specialty ward to be used by their primary specialties.
2. Create a reliable process in which stickers are produced and used in our ward.

Plan: What will your test be?

Create a stand containing a supply of stickers with advice to their insertion and serve as a prompt for visiting teams in order to utilise this communication tool after reviewing their patient.
Discussions with senior charge nurse and secretarial team of the Otolaryngology ward regarding printing and dissemination of stickers.

Prediction: What do you think will happen as a result of your test?

Compliance with sticker insertion and use will remain equally effective as when the stickers were inserted by junior doctors on the ward, resulting in good communication between teams.

Do: What happened when you carried out your test?

There were a reduced number of boarded patients during this data collection period due to seasonal fluctuations in hospital admissions. Of the five potential patient reviews on the ward during the nine-day period of data collection, only one sticker was completed by the primary specialty. This patient required blood tests which was communicated to the junior doctor and nurse. Discussions with the managerial and secretarial Otolaryngology team proved to be challenging as staff were concerned that the production and distribution of stickers would increase their workload.

Study: How did the results of your test compare with predictions?

Our findings were not in keeping with our predictions. There was a stark difference in compliance with stickers when the responsibility of their insertion was shifted from ward based junior doctors to the primary specialty team. The utilisation of the stand containing stickers was not a sustainable method for their use.

Act: How will you change your previous test in light of what you have learned?

Our previous data collection showed that the stickers were an excellent and effective communication tool but their use could not be sustained through use of a stand or through junior doctors inserting the stickers due to frequent staff turnover every four months. We aim to engage more stakeholders to raise awareness of the problem and brainstorm solutions together, as well as review the production and implementation of stickers with senior hospital management to discuss the potential use of this tool within hospital practice.