

Improving Patient Education in Patients with Subarachnoid Hemorrhage

BACKGROUND

A large concern for Subarachnoid Hemorrhage (SAH) patients is the development of vasospasm, a life-threatening complication, which results in decreased blood flow to the brain and subsequent tissue damage/death. Many measures are taken to prevent vasospasms, and these encompass a large part of nursing care. However, many patients with SAH report frustration with the frequency and meticulousness of the prevention measures.

An environmental scan was conducted involving interviewing staff, reviewing literature, and scanning current resources. It was determined that providing an educational brochure would be beneficial for SAH patients.

METHODS

This Quality Improvement project employed the Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) methodology, which involves iterative cycles to implement and monitor change. Qualitative data was collected via semi-structured interviews at the bedside to understand the effect that the brochure had on patients. Two open ended questions were asked:

- How useful was the information in the brochure?
- How well did the brochure address your personal questions or concerns about health or treatment?

RESULTS

6 SAH patients were admitted to the L2 Neuro ICU within the data collection timeframe (Feb 2025- March 2025).

Data was collected from 3 patients and 4 themes emerged:

Patient readiness and empowerment:

- Patients found the brochure useful to understand their condition and requested additional information such as specific medications or healthcare provider details.
- One patient reported feeling fatigued and stated they would read the brochure at a later time.
- Patients appreciated physical copies of a resource that they could revisit at their own pace, especially during times of fatigue or information overload (unlike verbal information from staff).

Accessible communication through visuals and plain language:

- It was continuously emphasized from both patients and nurses that the visual aids and use of plain language were extremely effective in aiding their understanding of SAH.

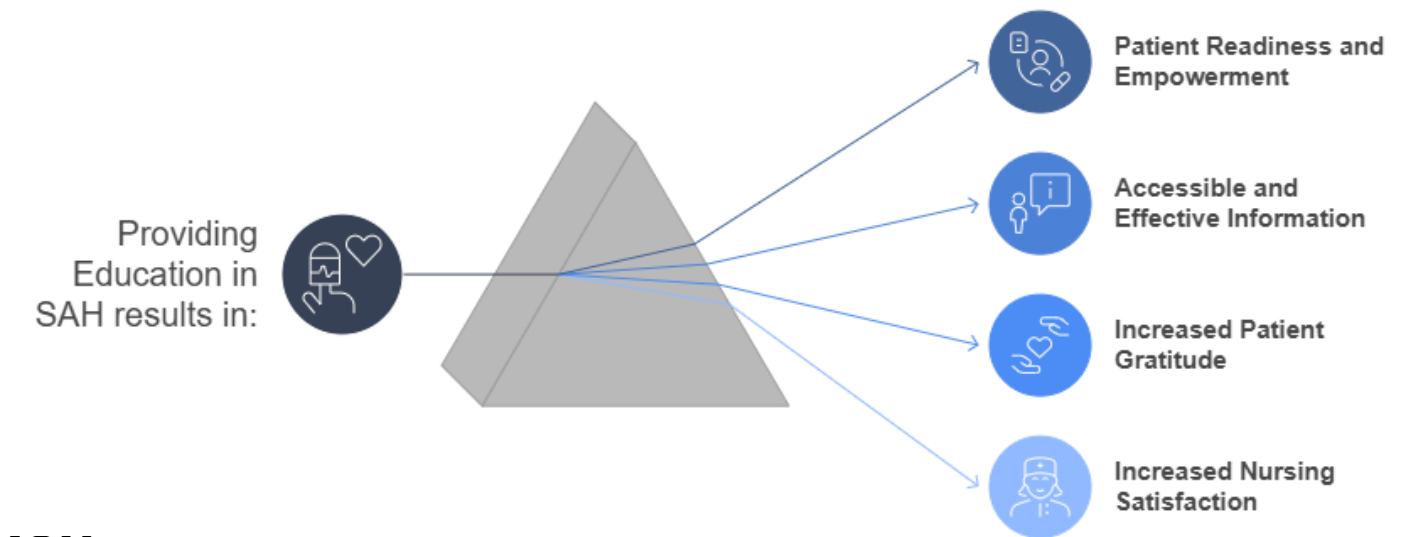
Increased patient gratitude by fostering open communication:

- Patients appreciated discussing their experiences surrounding their stay.
- Patients found reassurance knowing there was a resource available to address their concerns.
- Patients shared how overwhelming their experiences were and how much they valued the care they provided.

Positive impact on nursing satisfaction:

- Several nurses were enthusiastic about utilizing the brochure in their practice, as they often faced patients with many questions.
- Nurses distributed the brochure without prompting.
- Nurses and nursing students also used the brochure to enhance their understanding of SAH.

Benefits of Patient Education in SAH Patients



CONCLUSION

Through the interviews it was revealed that distributing educational resources led to a more positive patient experience. The 4 themes will be discussed below:

1. Patients can be ready and eager to engage in learning when the conditions are right. Physical copies of a resource are important as they allow patients to review the information at their own pace, supporting patient readiness, and thereby promoting patient empowerment.
2. Use of plain language and incorporating visuals in the brochure was effective in communicating the diagnosis and treatment of SAH. These strategies are important to make information accessible, as many patients have diverse learning styles.
3. The brochure increased patient gratitude by fostering open communication. Simply informing patients about the project and its goal to improve care for both them and future patients sparked meaningful conversations about their hospital stay. This highlights the importance of acknowledging the patient's experience and demonstrates the value of the brochure as a tool to start these conversations.
4. Although the interviews were initially patient-focused, the impact on nurses should not be overlooked. The brochure not only enhanced nurses' understanding of SAH but also served as a valuable tool to improve their patients' experience and support their clinical workflow.

Originally, the primary goal was to address patients' feelings of anxiety and frustration. However, through patient interviews, it was found that the brochure does not directly affect levels of these emotions as their causes are often multifaceted. Nonetheless, providing the educational brochure created a more compassionate healthcare experience by addressing patients' informational and emotional needs. This is a key component of holistic care and highlights an approach that would benefit all patients, not solely those with SAH.