

Learning from successful wards to improve patient safety

Field work diary guidance

Aim:

The concrete strategies and behaviours that teams use to deliver safe patient care (e.g. a specific handover process) will be identified by staff through the focus groups. Field work diaries aim to build a qualitative picture of each ward. They will be used to identify some of the more abstract and contextual nuances of how team dynamics and ward culture contribute to the successful delivery of safe patient care.

Procedure:

Field work diaries are to be completed following each visit or interaction with a ward (e.g. telephone correspondence). Whilst collecting surveys on each ward you will have an opportunity to observe how patient care is delivered and how the team interacts and communicates with each other, patients, visitors and the research team. At the end of each visit or interaction with the ward, please document your observations specifically in relation to the headings below. Field work diaries should also be completed after each focus group. Each record should be identified with the ward name and the date / time of the visit. An entry does not have to be written for every heading – please just document observations which appear most important.

Focus for observations:

Focus	Description
Communication	The quality and quantity of information exchanged by team members
Coordination	The management and timing of activities and tasks
Cooperation and backup	The assistance provided among members of the team, supporting others and correcting errors
Leadership	The provision of direction, assertiveness and support among team members
Monitoring and situational awareness	Team observation and awareness of ongoing processes
Staff - patient interactions	Staff responses to patients' feelings and needs (empathy). The degree of coherence in the interaction / conversation, verbal and non-verbal expression. Treatment of patients with dignity and respect.
Staffing levels and workload	Staffing levels on the ward, team composition, influences of hierarchy, stress levels and workload
Patient case mix	Patient case mix including frailty and dependence on staff
Engagement with the research	The ward team's awareness of the study and their interactions with the research team