

**Davee Innovations:
Optimizing Communication in the Emergency Department
Update
December 31, 2007**

Background

Effective communication is key for high-quality, patient-centered healthcare. In order to better understand what effective medical communication is, we were prompted to first extensively review the literature. We have conducted literature searches, compiled other Emergency Departments' efforts to improve patient experiences through training and/or informational campaigns, and explored communication best practices and applicability to the emergency department environment. These remain ongoing endeavors.

What is notable is the paucity of information. Despite the recognition of the importance of communication, the lack of research and formal curricula has hindered efforts to build upon the work of others. At the same time, the tremendous need for effective communication provides ample opportunity for Northwestern to not only demonstrate effective communication in the day-to-day clinical setting, but also the opportunity to disseminate to others what we have learned. We hope to not only improve our patients' experiences, but also the experience of other ED patients.

In addition, an internet website for Davee Innovations: Optimizing Communication in the Emergency Department was created. This has dual purposes: 1) as an educational resource for others 2) as a means of effective communication to the various team members involved in this project. Regular website updates are planned in order to provide the most up-to-date information.

Project Focus: Locally and Nationally

First and foremost, providing the best patient experience in the Emergency Department is our goal. Effective communication that meets patients' needs but then provides an understanding of their ED visit above and beyond their expectations is our ultimate goal. Improving communication between the medical team and Northwestern Memorial Hospital patients is the first step toward achieving these goals. We consistently strive to improve our communication with our patient base through innovative changes in operations, evaluation, and training of medical personnel. Through evaluation of our own medical team's communication skills and needs and review of NMH patients' expectations, we will be able to develop a targeted, focused educational component for faculty, residents, and nurses.

Nationally, by focusing on our own improved communication within the emergency department, we hope to advance emergency medicine's communication efforts. These include meeting national guidelines set forth by the Accreditation Council of Graduate Medical Education and the Joint Commission. Our efforts to understand the ED patient and medical team are at the forefront of emergency medicine communication research.

The Medical Team Focus

Due to the complex nature of care in the emergency department and the constantly changing medical team, the Davee Communication Group decided to evaluate communication of the “medical team.” The emergency department medical team consists of attending physicians, residents, nurses, and other medical staff. Individually, these health care professionals may have a limited amount of direct face-to-face contact with the patient, but, in combination, define the type of care and communication each patient receives.

Operations

Front Line Triage Re-Organization

Led by: Barbara Buckley

Project Status: Began 12/4/07; will continue going forward

Goal: Improve efficiency of triage process

A pilot was developed and implemented (effective December 4, 2007) that shifts a Registrar to the front line of triage. This removes the need for registration in the triage booths, allowing triage nurses to rapidly access incoming patients and reassess those that are waiting for care.

The first week of feedback has been very positive. Triage booths are occupied for less time and triage nurses are able to assess and reassess patients in a more timely fashion. Ongoing progress meetings are taking place two times per week to assess the re-organization and make minor adjustments as needed.

This may have significant future implications as well in terms of space allocation. These discussions have been inclusive of ED management as well as quality leadership from the hospital

CSO Desk Relocation

Led by: Barbara Buckley

Project status: On hold

Goal: Effectively address patients’ inquiries and direct patients to triage desk for assessment.

A pilot was developed to relocate the CSO desk to the right of the triage desk and the Security Office to the right of the treatment doors. The CSO/SO as a team by the treatment area doors will better maintain the security of the treatment area and have a better visual of those entering the ED. Through this improved visibility, the CSO will be able to help filter those not needing care to help prevent unnecessary interruptions at the triage desk.

Signage

Led by: Barbara Buckley

Project status: Currently investigating signage options.

Goal: Improve signage to provide better direction to patients and their families to navigate the waiting room/triage and treatment areas.

Improved ED signage may decrease patients and their family’s anxiety in an unfamiliar environment.

ED Volunteers/Volunteer Advocate Training Program

Led by: Barbara Buckley

Project status: Currently in development; major roll-out to begin January 2008

Goal: Improve patients understanding of waits and delays in the waiting room as well as provide compassionate care

Barb has met with Dolly Johnson and Corinne Brophy from Volunteer Services to further develop the role of the Patient Advocate to include the waiting room. The ED Volunteer Advocate's main focus is currently in the treatment area. Developing the ED volunteer role is an ongoing process.

Operations Planning

Communication-Operations Project

Dr. Kyriacou and Dr. Lucenti will be working with the Davee team to assess and implement operational initiatives that will significantly affect communication

Education

CAT-T Project Intervention

Led by: Kirsten Engel, Michael Gisondi

Goals:

1. Educate ED providers about the importance of effective communication with our patients, the implications of communication failures, and the challenges to this process in our daily practice.
2. Heighten awareness of the specific deficiencies in communication with patients in our ED using the results of the CAT-T pretest.
3. Promote change by facilitating participation in a team process to discuss, develop and endorse improvements in our clinical practice.

Project Status: Planning Stages

The education component will extend the CAT-T's focus and emphasize the medical team and emphasize the team's performance. Two workshops will be held prior to the formal intervention. The education components will involve a brief didactic session (40-60 participants, 45 minutes) and small facilitated group discussions (20 participants, up to 2 hours). Education is expected to be completed by the end of 2008.

Currently discussions include examining the option of creating "Train the Trainers" aspect for interested residents/nurses to participate and become facilitators.

Davee Communication Website

Updated by: Laura Min Mercer

Goal: To disseminate information about health communication and the Davee Project.

The website update is ongoing. Currently, the website is located within the Emergency Department's webspace, located here:

<http://www.feinberg.northwestern.edu/emergencymed/davee/mission.html>

Patient Brochure

Led by: Barb Buckley

Project Status: Currently being revised, pending review.

The patient brochure, developed by Barb, along with nurse management and leaders, will provide patients with focused, targeted information about the ED process as well as answers to the most commonly asked questions. In addition, this will give ED volunteers an ice breaker to approach patients and provide talking points to patients in the waiting room.

Nursing Blitz Education

Led by: Barb Buckley

Project Status: Preparing presentation for January 31, 2008 – February 21, 2008

This annual RN education day will incorporate a 45 – 60 min presentation given by Barb about ED communication projects and achieving effective communication in the ED.

Robert Wood Johnson/Joint Commission

Led by: Peter S. Pang

Project Status: Planning Stages

Northwestern ED was invited to take part in this multi-site communication project which will include training sessions on communication.

Education Planning

Waiting Room LCD

Barb Buckley is currently investigating the feasibility of creating a NMH “Welcome to the ED” video which would be shown in the waiting room. She is currently preparing a proposal. There are many aspects to consider including partnership with NMH and ongoing support for electronic equipment and video production (costs and feasibility).

CME Communication Emergency Medicine Training

Potential idea for further education of emergency medicine physicians and also establishing NU ED as a leader in communication.

Research

Communication Assessment Tool – Pilot

Led by: Davee Communication Group

Goal: To assess feasibility of the CAT-T in the NMH ED

Project Status: Completed (July/August 2007)

Communication Assessment Tool – Team Pre-Test

Led by: Davee Communication Group

Goal: To collect baseline data that identifies the medical team’s communication strengths and areas for improvement (to be addressed in the *CAT-T Project Intervention*).

Project Status: Data collection began 11/12/07

Data collection began on November 12, 2007 and is expected to continue through December 21, 2007 or until enrollment reaches 400 patients. The CAT-T enrolls patients immediately following discharge or upon being assigned a hospital bed. The research staff is collecting data from approximately 6 am – 10 pm during every weekday from Teams 1-4.

The team is also working on a brief report for submission to *Academic Emergency Medicine* based on pilot data. Future publications and presentations will be submitted (SAEM-1/8/07, FSM Lewis Landsberg Research Day).

Triage Nurse Satisfaction Survey

Led by: Barbara Buckley

Goal: To gather information regarding the triage process and suggestions for improving the triage process from triage nurses.

Project Status: Survey currently online, undergoing revision

The survey will give triage nurses a forum for expressing their thoughts about the triage process and share ideas for improving the triage process. Currently, the survey creation is in the final stages of receiving approval before being given to all nurses.

Waiting Room Survey

Led by: Peter Pang, Laura Min Mercer

Goal: To gather patients' perceptions of the ED prior to a health visit.

Project Status: Development stages

This survey is currently being developed to gather patients' perceptions of the ED and understanding of the ED processes (e.g. triage). This survey will move forward once the CAT-T Pre-Test is nearing its end or is completed.

Publication Planning

CAT-T Brief Report

Corresponding Author: Peter S. Pang

Status: Undergoing final review by Dr. Adams and Dr. Makoul

Journal: *Academic Emergency Medicine*

The brief report gives an overview of the CAT-T and its pilot in the NMH ED.

SAEM Abstract #1 Urgent Care vs. Main Room CAT-T Results

Lead Resident: Sarah M. Donlan

Due: January 8, 2008

Status: Initial writing stages

Conference: SAEM

Uses CAT-T data

SAEM Abstract #2 CAT-T Pre-Test

Lead Resident: Sarah M. Donlan

Due: January 8, 2008

Status: Initial writing stages

Uses CAT-T data

SAEM Abstract #3 Wait Time (Perception vs. reality)

Lead Resident: Sarah M. Donlan

Due: January 8, 2008

Status: Initial writing stages

Uses CAT-T data

Feinberg School of Medicine Lewis Landsberg Research Day

Lead: TBD

Due: TBD

Status: Initial stages

Uses CAT-T data

National Communication Association Annual Conference

Lead: Laura Min Mercer

Due: Call for papers announced; currently no deadline (generally feb/march)

Status: Initial stages

CAT-T PreTest Manuscript

Corresponding Author: TBD

Status: Scheduled for writing following completion of Pre-Test

Journal: TBD

International Conference on Communication and Healthcare

Lead: TBD

Due: 2/1/2008

Location: Oslo, Norway

Dates: September 2-8, 2008

*Goal for 2008: International presence via presentation/paper at ICCH

CORD

Lead: TBD

Due: Generally 2nd or 3rd week of January

ACGME Educational Conference 2008

Lead: TBD

Due: Abstract submission closed

Location: Grapevine, Texas

Dates: February 28-March 2, 2008

American Nursing Association

Lead: Barb Buckley, Paula Tanabe (?)

Due: Depends on sponsored conference; many 2008 conference abstract call submission dates have passed

Healthcare improvement/quality groups

Miscellaneous Projects

Communication Article Compilation

Coordinator: Laura Min Mercer

Project Status: Ongoing

Communication article literature searches are regularly performed and relevant articles collected in both electronic and hard paper form and an EndNotes database is kept.

ED Video Clips

Coordinator: Laura Min Mercer

Project Status: Initial planning stages

Video clips and photographs of ED communication situations will be created for use in presentations and education settings. The ED is partnering with the Center for Communication in Medicine (Dr. Gregory Makoul and Karen Christopher).

Effective Communication Brainstorming Sessions

Led by: Barb Buckley

Goal: To gather ideas and statements RN's already use or possible statements they think will be helpful when communicating with patients and families.

Project Status: Ongoing

The RN's meet regularly to share helpful statements and identify when key communication occurs during the ED visit. These statements and moments will be collected and revised by Barb for inclusion in the *Nursing Blitz* presentation.

Future Funding

Begin brainstorming future proposal ideas for Ann Murray for continued philanthropic support.

Currently identifying different grants for possible grant proposal submissions to continue ED communication work.

Building on Individual's Strengths and Formalization of the Davee Communication Group

Ultimately, the best people will be the single most important success factor. A number of faculty members have been recruited for the Davee project. These people were invited to participate based on their talents, experience, enthusiasm, and dedication toward our patients and improving communication. Please see below for a brief biography about each faculty member.

The Davee Communication Group has set their initial focus on two main areas: 1) Improving communication between the health care team and the patient. First steps have been to better understand the patient's needs and perspectives. This will direct educational interventions toward

those ends 2) improving the waiting room experience. At the same time, we continue to plan with focus on each phase of the patient's experience through the ED.

Faculty Members of the Davee Communication Group

James G. Adams, MD, Professor and Chair, Dept. of Emergency Medicine

Dr. Adams has established himself as an expert on organizational performance and ethics within emergency medicine. He is committed to enhancing the patient experience and leads the Davee project.

Kirsten Engel, MD, Consultant

After residency, Dr. Engel's past research has focused on patient-provider communication in the emergency department which led to becoming a Semi-Finalist for the SAEM Annual Meeting Scientific Award in the Young Investigator Category in 2006. She remains interested in identifying barriers to effective information exchange in the acute care setting and assessing the impact of these difficulties on patient outcomes of satisfaction, comprehension, and adherence.

Michael A. Gisondi, MD, Assistant Professor, Dept. of Emergency Medicine

Dr. Gisondi, Assistant Director of the Residency Program, completed a faculty development fellowship prior to coming to Northwestern. His interests broadly include medical education and continued development. His skills will be used to help the Davee project meet educational goals.

Demetrios N. Kyriacou, MD, PhD, MPH, DTM&H, Associate Professor, Dept. of Emergency Medicine

Dr. Kyriacou will be working on an operations communication project and lending his research expertise to the Davee team.

Martin J. Lucenti, Jr., MD, PhD, Assistant Professor, Dept. of Emergency Medicine

Dr. Lucenti, Director of Clinical Operations, will be participating in the operations aspect of the Davee project.

Gregory Makoul, PhD, Director, Center for Communication and Medicine

Dr. Makoul has done extensive research within medical communication including the development of several communication assessment instruments. His expertise will help the Davee team identify areas of opportunity, educational programs to address those areas, and measurement of improvement.

Peter S. Pang, MD, Associate Medical Director, Assistant Professor, Dept. of Emergency Medicine

As project director, Dr. Pang is in charge of the day-to-day oversight of the Davee project. Dr. Pang's research interests include communication and heart failure.

Paula Tanabe, PhD, RN, MPH, Research Assistant Professor, Dept. of Emergency Medicine

Dr. Tanabe's extensive research experience grounds the Davee project to ensure research-based knowledge and dissemination of information throughout the academic community. Dr. Tanabe currently has two research projects involving sickle cell patients and nurses.