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Implementing an Evidence-Based Practice Approach to Improve Communication of Surgical Delays to Patients and Family Members

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Introduction and Problem Statement

Surgical procedures cause anxiety not only for the patient, but also for waiting family members. In order to improve the experience for those in the waiting room, it is important to reduce their anxiety and stress level. Enhancing perioperative communication can help reduce that anxiety. Effectiveness of that communication can have a direct impact on patient experience scores.

For perioperative services, the patient experience indicator which addresses communication is *Information provided about delays*.

The scores for this indicator in the surgical services department for the first quarter of 2016 was 56th percentile, reflecting an opportunity for improvement.

PICO Question

In patients and families awaiting surgery, will having direct communication and other patient-centered strategies improve the patient experience as measured by the question “Information provided about delays (if you experienced delays)”?

Project Goals

1. Develop high-impact nurse-driven communication strategies for interacting with patients and families during the perioperative period.
2. Improve the patient and family outcomes related to communication of delays in surgery to the 93rd percentile.

Affiliations and Acknowledgements

Affiliations

1. Inova Mount Vernon Hospital
2. George Mason University DNP Student

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Intervention - Improvement Methods

The EBP team began this project with an extensive literature review to identify best practices. Based upon their findings and with the input of patient advisors, the following intervention strategies were implemented:

1. A Surgical Services RN is assigned the role of Patient Family Liaison (PFL).
2. The PFL meets with the patient and family to discuss the flow of the day, obtain contact information, and provide the family with the PFL's phone number.
3. The PFL escorts family to the waiting area, orients them to surroundings, and informs them when she will be back.
4. The PFL is in continual communication with the OR Charge Nurse and reconnects with the family at regular intervals.
5. If a surgical delay occurs, the PFL explains the course of action to the family and performs service recovery.

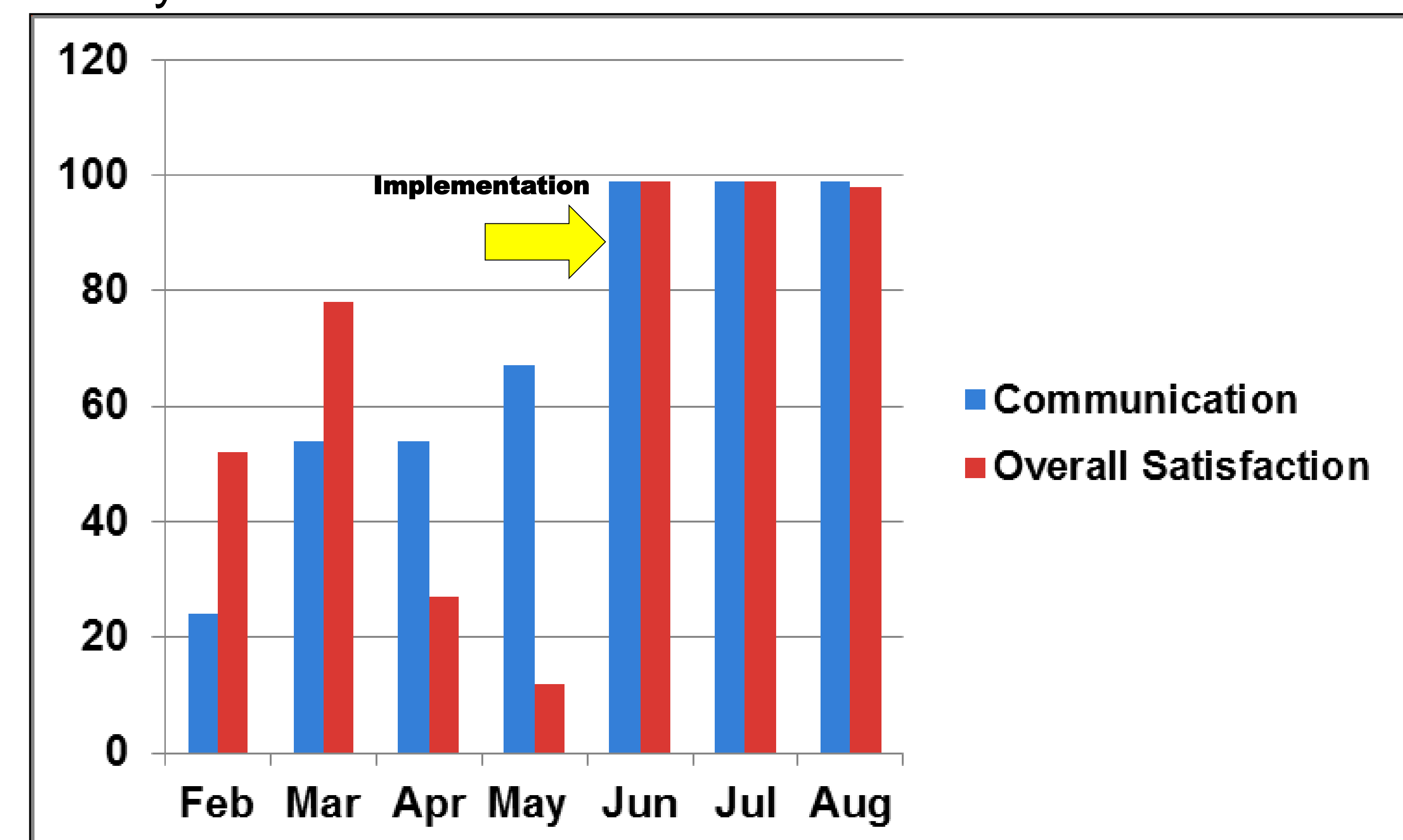


Tools/Equipment

- Dedicated cell phone for PFL
- Business cards with PFL phone number
- Family contact information form
- Service recovery items
- “While You Are Waiting” brochure
- Scripting for PFL on how to address delays

Improvement Achieved - Outcome

Improvement was demonstrated in the Information About Delays score and in the Overall Satisfaction score.



Data is presented in percentile ranking

Recommendations

1. The PFL should be a dedicated role.
2. The PFL should be an RN familiar with perioperative services.
3. Involve other disciplines as needed to strengthen positive patient/family perceptions, e.g. Patient Experience Manager, Chaplain, Volunteers.
4. Keep track of common issues identified by patient and family to address proactively.

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