

Creating an Acuity and Productivity Measurement Tool for an Inpatient Palliative Care Service

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Brief Description:

The Palliative Care CNS and Physician Faculty identified the need to create a tool to measure the acuity of Palliative patients at an academic medical center. This tool assesses factors such as common patient diagnoses and requirements, average time of visits and whether daily visits were required. This tool has also demonstrated value in measuring the productivity of Palliative team members.

Full Description:

Full Description: The Palliative Care CNS was asked to develop a tool to measure the acuity of patients at an academic medical center with 230 beds, which hosts geriatrics, solid oncology and broad-spectrum critical care units. At that time, the Palliative team consisted only of the CNS and Attending physician; but rapid census expansion (700% in the first four months) required the addition of new faculty. The goal of this tool initially was to help guide new faculty and intermittent educational faculty (Fellows and Residents) in prioritizing their patient loads. The CNS identified through literature and observation the most common patient needs, average time of visits, and whether daily visitation was required.

The CNS used these observations to create an A-B-C acuity tool that assisted with prioritization. A secondary effect of this tool was that the developing Palliative service was able to perform rough but objective measurements of their productivity by calculating the number of patients in each category and multiplying that number by the average time visits to these patients would take. The Acuity Tool is being used to justify expansion of the program and support the need for additional resources. As the service expanded, additional categories have been added to measure the patient acuity and contributions of the CNS herself, the Chaplain and the Social Work Liaison.

Learning Objectives:

- Discuss the components involved in determining the general acuity of Palliative Care patients.
- Describe the ways that census and acuity can assist in measuring Palliative team productivity.
- Anticipate future needs of a developing Palliative Care program by using and expanding upon Acuity Tool criteria.

Results

Topic Domains

- Hospital: Established, Teaching and Tertiary
- Quality Improvement
- Medicine
- Nursing

