

Improving patient safety and the way we work: obstetric anaesthetic records at Altnagelvin hospital

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Introduction

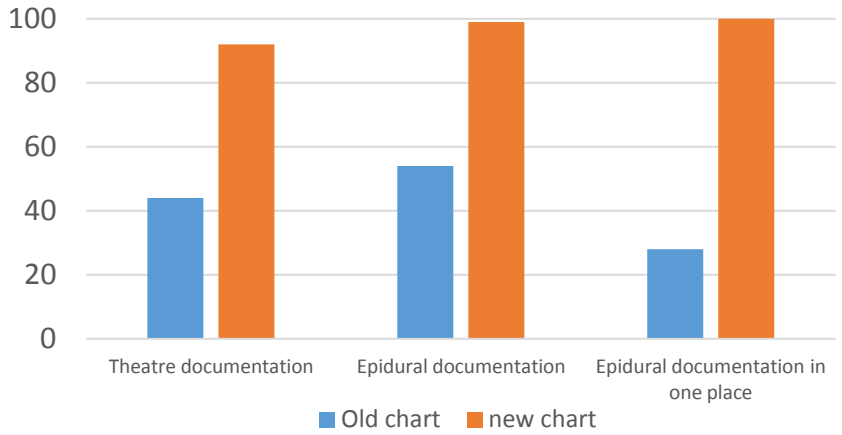
Documentation is the cornerstone of patient safety and provides the foundation necessary to deliver quality care[1]. In our hospital a obstetric chart for anaesthesia existed but was in need of modernisation. Furthermore there was now a need for a robust document which would stand up against judicial review and provide a clear patient pathway[2]. There is no standard anaesthetic obstetric chart in the UK or regionally in Northern Ireland. In December 2020 our anaesthetic chart underwent a complete overhaul with input from our anaesthetic colleagues, obstetric colleagues, the midwifery team and reflects the best current guidance

Methods

We did a prospective audit of 49 of the old anaesthetic charts and sought formal feedback from our anaesthetic colleagues regarding improvements that could be made. Documentation of epidurals was also audited. We also engaged with the midwifery team to incorporate the epidural observations into one complete anaesthetic chart. Initially 10 copies were made followed by 20 copies, 50 copies and then 100 copies with each stage of this process being reviewed and improvements made. The final version was audited and reviewed at the divisional anaesthetic meeting

Results

We audited 49 old charts and 52 of the new obstetric charts. There was a significant improvement in both recording of anaesthetic records in theatre and documentation of epidurals on the labour ward



Results showing percentage documentation has improved significantly in obstetrics in Altnagelvin Hospital

Discussion

An anaesthetic chart is an essential ingredient of risk management and forms the basis of quality patient care. Creating a bespoke A3 anaesthetic chart that allows all documentation to one place has greatly improved patient safety. Our chart also demonstrates the great work that can be accomplished when two specialities work closely together

References

1. OAA Suggested dataset for obstetric anaesthetic charts. Obstetric Anaesthetists' Association. April 2010
2. Ten Years of Maternity Claims – an analysis of NHS Litigation Authority Data'. NHS Litigation Authority. October 2012