Background
Hospital nurse handoffs are a critical component in the continuity of care for patients. Handoffs or shift reports have received increased attention in recent years within the nursing research community. AHRQ has advocated for the bedside shift report to facilitate patient and family engagement and improve healthcare quality. Researchers have identified the purpose, problems and functions of the report. Methods of analysis are typically interviews and surveys. Methods and perspectives from industrial and human factors engineering can foster new insight into the effect that shift reports have on nursing care and ways to improve shift report effectiveness.

Aim Statement
We wanted to learn nurses’ perspectives on what and how different factors in the shift report affected the subsequent nursing care.

Results
Nurses use two primary themes when talking about their ideal shift report and start of shift and ways that it deviated from the ideal.

Teamwork: Two nurses, the patient & the family
Ideal: Having the same expectations across all team members for how a shift report should be conducted (in the room/not in the room, type of information and when it is presented) with all the nursing work from the previous shift completed.

Shared understanding of the patient’s condition
Ideal: The incoming nurse prepared by reading the summary on each patient & ready with questions to be answered as part of the shift report. Ordered, concise, accurate exchange of information in line with the expectations of the nurse. Some interaction with the patient during the report process

Not ideal: The disruption of either one or both elements appears to cause a disruption or disordering of the shared understanding and transition into the nursing work.

Effect on the subsequent shift:
Additional task(s) for the nurse to create order as part of the shift report process or interposes additional task(s) during that subsequent nursing care.

Conclusions
Ideal: There is an ordered exchange of information in line with the expectations of the entire team.
Not ideal: The disruption of either one or both elements appears to cause a disruption or disordering of the shared understanding and transition into the nursing work.

References

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