

Emergency DNA: The essential building blocks in providing quality care in the emergency department

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Once upon a time there was a little nurse who dreamt that it was possible to stop people falling over. She thought to herself:

Within an environment of increasing pressure on health professionals there is a concurrent drive to provide accessible, affordable and quality care to all patients. At the same time, there is a constant need for health care providers to be proactive in maintaining and researching best practice standards.

In order to achieve this nurse's dream, the team of nurses at Calvary Health Care ACT's emergency department have created portfolio groups, focusing on the areas of preventable harm and quality health care provision. These areas include infection control, falls risk and manual handling, blood safety, handover, procedural safety, skin integrity, education and medication safety. These portfolios reflect the National Safety and Quality Health Standards and demonstrate our commitment in striving to meet a high standard of care.

To improve patient care, staff satisfaction and promote positive outcomes, the portfolios draw input from multiple staff members, of varied levels of experience. Staff involved feel empowered and are passionate in making a difference whilst enthusiastically taking responsibility for change, focusing on; project development, risk identification, providing continuing education and professional development, data collection and auditing. These contributions have affected our department on multiple levels including though not limited to; de-cluttering, improving overall safety, resource management, daily education - increasing confidence and skills within the staff, increased overall team collaboration and support. Meetings are held regularly to discuss progress within the groups and all of the members are given the chance to voice their suggestions.

The portfolios are able to identify areas of possible improvement within the department both of a positive and neutral nature, from varied sources of locally generated evidence, available from monthly audit collection, staff and patient surveys, risk reports and general compliance reports. From this position we can alter and reformat our approach to each topic/area of focus and continue our drive to provide quality nursing care and delivering improved clinical outcomes for patients.

The provision of quality emergency nursing care, through engagement and ownership of quality, by those directly providing the care.

The little nurse smiled and gave herself a pat on the back for being such a dreamer and went and had a coffee...