



Documenting In the Medical Record: Experiences of Engagement (DIMREE)”



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Aim

Patient-centred care improves patient experience and outcomes. One strategy for patient centred care - used successfully in primary care settings, and overseas - is to engage patients around medical record documentation. This project aimed to discover the lived experiences of health professionals and patients around documenting in the medical record in a NSW rural hospital, with the view that findings will guide meaningful quality improvement strategies for the rural context.

Method

Interpretive phenomenology guided this research, which employed participant drawings, participant drawing interpretation and semi-structured interviews with eight participants. Thematic analysis was used to develop themes from the data. Themes were further interpreted as part of hermeneutic analysis.

Results

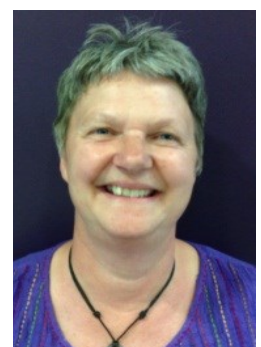
The four themes developed from this study were treat me as a person, ownership of the medical record, medical record as a tool for engagement and the medical record as a barrier to engagement. The experience of engagement around documentation for patients was far from person-centred: it was depersonalising, sometimes leading to frustration. Health professionals too sometimes reported dissatisfaction with the level of engagement. Health professionals sometimes employed the medical record as a tool for engagement but this was not always possible, and the medical record was sometimes considered a barrier to engagement.

Conclusion

In the rural hospital ward there may currently be little engagement around documentation in the medical record, a situation which represents a missed opportunity for implementing patient-centred care. Multidisciplinary quality activities to strengthen patient centred care in rural hospitals should include the scoping, trial and implementation of feasible strategies to support engagement around medical record documentation.

For the full report on this project visit our website, follow the link to the Rural Research Capacity Building Program and click on 'view completed projects'

Sally Josh works in Southern NSW LHD Clinical Governance as the Research Support Officer. She has a keen interest in improving patient quality and safety, and in listening to and acting on the patient experience. She maintains a very broad interest in health care and research across disciplines and sectors.



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