

QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PROJECT
MIND THE GAP:
IMPROVING PSYCHIATRIC PATIENT DISCHARGE
SUMMARIES FOR A SAFE STEP FROM HOSPITAL TO COMMUNITY
 Dr Alison Thornton (FY3) and Dr Anne Wisdom (ST5)*
 Audit carried out on a psychiatric ward in the North of England

Introduction

To ensure the safe and effective care of patients following their discharge from inpatient psychiatric units, it is essential that accurate discharge information is conveyed to the wider team in a timely manner. Feedback from community teams indicated this was not the case, potentially jeopardising the safe transfer of care between inpatient and community services. The aim of this project was to improve the quality of the discharge summaries in accordance with Professional Records Standards Body (PRSB) guidance (1). The project was carried out on a general adult psychiatric ward in the North of England.

Methods

An audit was conducted in December 2020 which reviewed ten electronic discharge summaries against PRSB standards. The audit revealed several areas of non-compliance including lack of documented diagnoses, allergy status and medication changes. It also identified a lack of consistency regarding which staff members, medical or nursing, were responsible for completing each section of the summary. A quality improvement project was initiated to improve the standard of the discharge summaries. A collaborative approach was adopted with full involvement of the nursing team who agreed that changes were required. The project involved creating a discharge template, clarifying areas of responsibility with nursing colleagues and identifying processes to ensure that senior medical colleagues recorded patient diagnoses, which were then pre-populated onto the discharge template.

Results

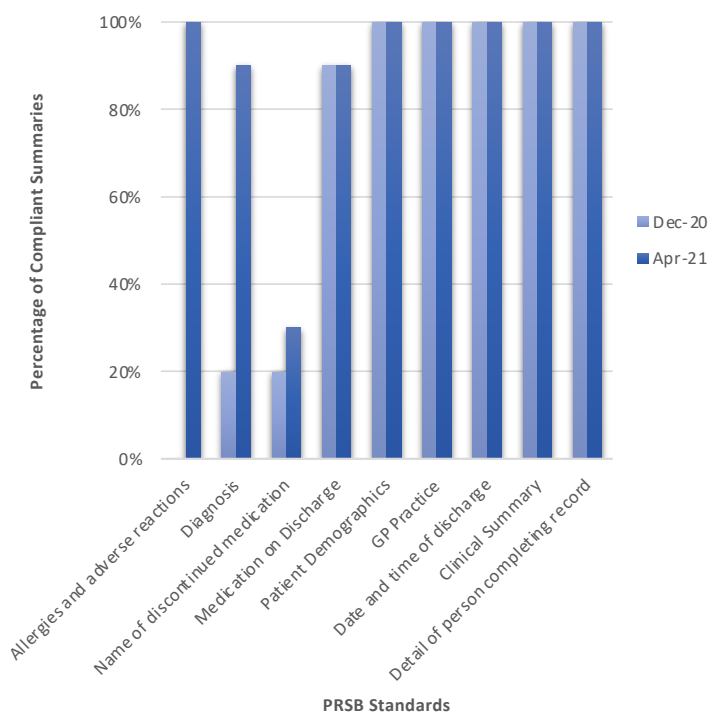
The audit in December 2020 demonstrated:

- Overall compliance of **73%** with PRSB standards
- Allergy status was documented in **0%** of letters
- Discontinued medication was documented in **20%** of letters
- Diagnosis was documented in **20%** of letters

The re-audit in April 2021 reviewed ten electronic discharge summaries and demonstrated:

- Overall compliance of **91%** with PRSB standards
- Allergy status was documented in **100%** of letters
- Discontinued medication was documented in **30%** of letters
- Diagnosis was documented in **90%** of letters

Results – Dec 2020 vs. Apr 2021



Conclusion

The initial audit highlighted that discharge summaries were not compliant with PRSB standards. This project set out to address deficits and ensure adherence to standards, aiming to improve communication between the inpatient ward and community services to the benefit of ongoing patient care. The results and conclusions arising from the re-audit have noted significant improvements in compliance with standards and a further audit cycle may be beneficial to ensure continued compliance.

*Joint first authors

Contact Details

Dr Alison Thornton
 alison.thornton@nhs.net

Dr Anne Wisdom
 annewisdom@nhs.net

References

(1) Professional Record Standards Body (2019) 'Mental Health Inpatient Discharge 2.1' available at <https://theprsb.org/standards/mentalhealth/> accessed 31 August 2021.