



“Inpatient Trial of My Healthcare Journal”

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Background



- Journaling in its various forms has been used, for the past three decades, in adult education but also in health care for recording personal thoughts, daily experiences, and evolving insights (Hiemstra, 2002; Hayman *et al.* 2012)
- The literature describes various journal types and formats: *learning journals* (e.g. reflection /critical thinking), *diaries* (e.g. expressive writing), *logs* and *question sheets* (e.g. note taking) – and today there are also *electronic versions* of diaries (i.e. blogs, smartphones and tablet apps) (Middleton 1994, Hiemstra, 2002, Smith *et al.* 2005, Hermansen-Kobulnicky *et al.* 2014, Garrouste-Orgeas *et al.* 2017, Scruth *et al.* 2017)
- Journaling has been used for a variety of reasons in health care and the current evidence supports benefits such as: *personal growth*, *coping* (e.g. cancer patients), *stress reduction* (e.g. critical illness/ICU experience), *improved communication: asking questions and addressing issues* (e.g. older patients), and *better comprehension and information recall* (e.g. new mothers) (Klingenberg *et al.* 2005, Kistin *et al.* 2012, Hermansen-Kobulnicky *et al.* 2014, Scruth *et al.* 2017)
- The starting point, and our assumption, was that providing journals (paper and pen) as part of nursing practice will help to improve communication between patients, families and their healthcare team.



Purpose

- The overall goal of this project was to improve patient and family communication during their hospital stay.
- The purpose of the study was to describe patients' and their families' perceptions and satisfaction of using the journal to communication with their healthcare team.

Method



- The journal was initially trialed on two adult inpatient units, one medical and the other surgical (R3, R7) in 2007-2008. (IRB#3137X).
- During the second phase (Phase II), journals were distributed to additional adult medical (R2, P3CD, Gibson), surgical (R1, R3, R5, R6, R9) and pediatric (Barbara Bush Children's Hospital) inpatient units.
- Units excluded were: P6 (psychiatry), Mother-baby, critical care units (CICU, CTICU, SCU 1-3, NICU), ED, ORs & Scarborough Surgery Center (SSC, outpatient unit), and ambulatory care units (ACCU, ASU)
- In the third phase (Phase III) all patient populations were invited to use the journal .
- Research project spanned over calendar years 2009 – 2017 (IRB #3526)
- Over 15,000 patient journals were distributed.

Data Collection and Analysis



- The two page survey contained seven items, with response options ranging from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree), and a comment section.
- The questions focused on:
 - communication and partnering with doctors, nurses, other staff involved with their care and
 - usefulness and satisfaction with the journal.
- The kit provided to the patient included: a journal with medication card, introduction letter, “It’s okay to ask questions” –sheet, envelope, and survey assembled in a plastic bag.
- The patients journals were not collected for this study.
- Survey data were analyzed statistically and using content analysis method.



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Patient and Family Journal Survey

As part of our continuing effort to encourage communication between patients, families and their care givers, please take a moment to evaluate the journal that you were provided with upon admission.

Shade Circles Like This Not Like This

Are You: A Patient A Family Member A Guardian / Caretaker

1. The Journal helped me and my family communicate better with the doctors.
 Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

2. The Journal helped me and my family communicate better with the nurses.
 Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

3. The Journal helped me and my family communicate better with the other staff involved with my care, i.e. discharge planner, social work.
 Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

4. Which part of the journal did you find the most useful during your stay?
 A place to write questions
 A place to write down my personal feelings
 Medication Card

5. Were you satisfied with the amount of space provided in the Journal?
 Very satisfied
 Satisfied
 Neutral
 Somewhat dissatisfied
 Very dissatisfied

6. The patient or family was more involved in the discussion about their health care decisions and had a better understanding of their care plan.
 Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

7. The journal increased my ability to partner with my healthcare providers.
 Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

Comments:

1
2

Results

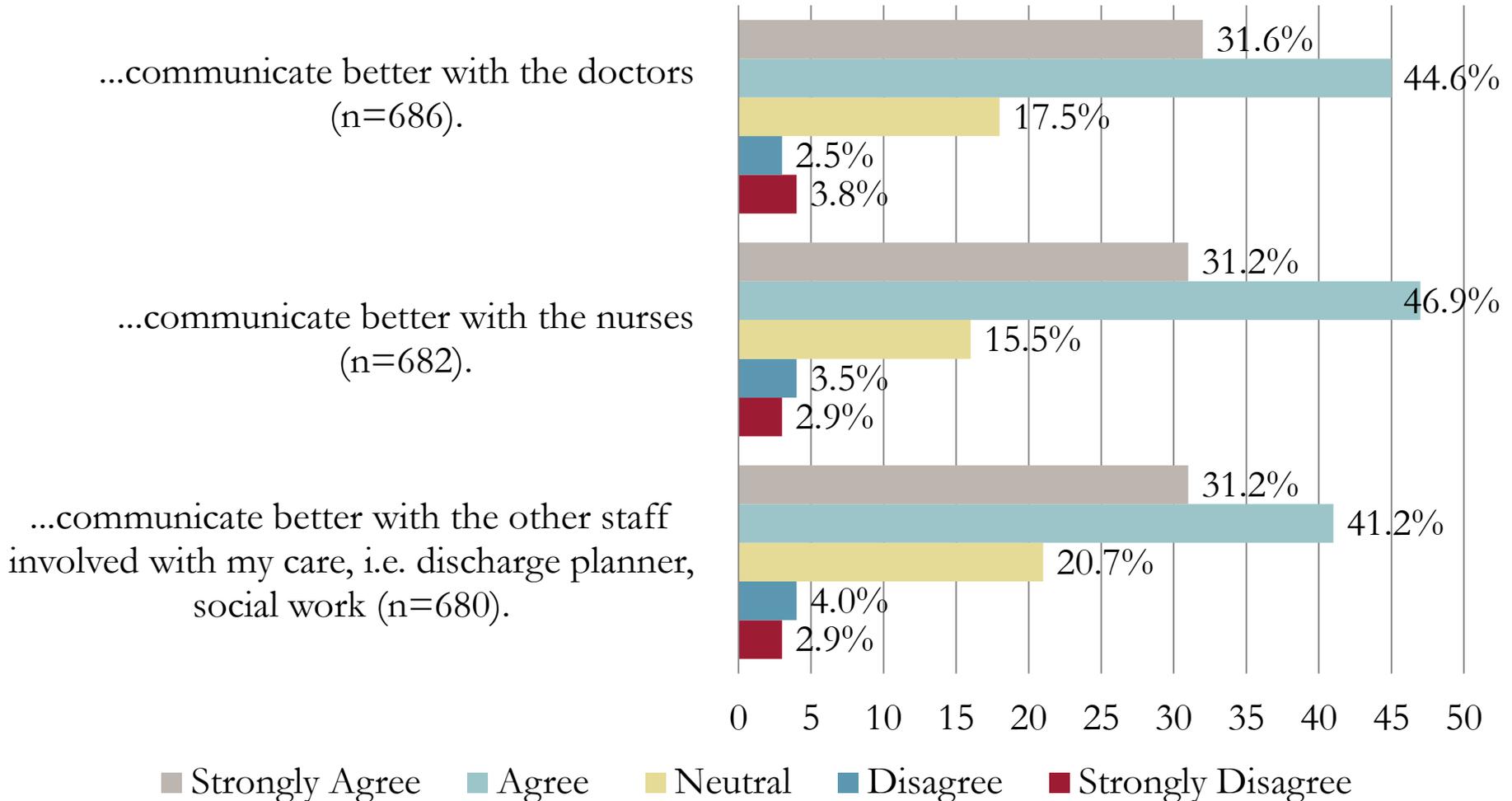


- Seven hundred and thirty four (N=734) surveys were collected.
- Respondents were primarily patients (84%, n=583), and then family members (14%, n=95), guardians/caretakers (2%, n=14). Some respondents (n=42) did not answer this question or specify their relationship.
- Survey responses to the journal were positive overall.
- On the scale of 1 to 5 (1=strongly agree, 5=strongly disagree), survey respondents agreed that the journal helped them to:
 - communicate with doctors (Mean=2.02, SD .966),
 - nurses (Mean=2.00, SD .934),
 - other health care staff (Mean=2.06, SD .970) and
 - increased their ability to partner with their health care providers. (Mean=2.00, SD .940). (Figure 1.)
- Respondents also agreed that the journal helped them to feel more involved in their health care decisions (Mean=2.1). (Figure 1.)

Results (cont.)



The Journal helped...



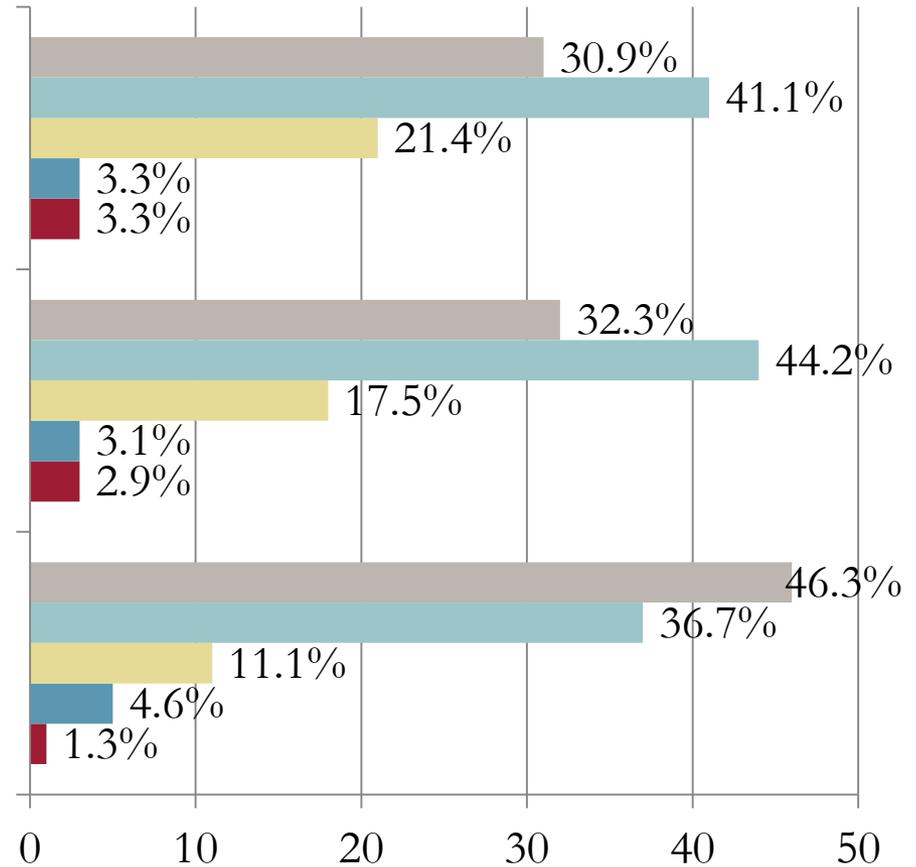
Results (cont.)



Using the Journal, I or my family member, felt more involved in the discussion about my health care decisions and had a better understanding of the plan of care (n=666)

The Journal increased my ability to partner with my health care providers (n=663).

Were you satisfied with the amount of space provided in the journal (n=668)?



Strongly Agree
 Agree
 Neutral
 Disagree
 Strongly Disagree

Results *(cont.)*



- Majority of the respondents 83% (83%, n=554) were very satisfied or satisfied with the amount of space provided in the journal (Figure 1.) and over half (61.5%, n=515) found the journal useful to write questions (Table 1.)

Table 1: Usefulness and satisfaction with the journal

Which part of the journal did you find the most useful during your stay?	n	%
- A place to write questions	515	61.5%
- A place to write down my personal feelings	158	18.9%
- Medical Card	161	19.2%
- Other (e.g. keep track on feeding and diapers)	3	0.4%

Results *(cont.)*



- The returned surveys included approximately 446 hand-written comments.
- The comments concentrated on three major themes: (1) healthcare team (34%), (2) the journal (60%) and (3) hospital organization (6%) – and addressed positive compliments [72%] or concerns [28%].
- Examples representing the major themes are offered below (Table 2.)

Major themes	Positive comments / Compliments	Concerns
Healthcare team	<p>...Maine Med has the best nurses doctors in the USA...(#59)</p> <p>...I have a lasting impression of excellence in all facets of medical care, the nursing staff are among the best I have encountered...(#28)</p> <p>...thank you for the care given to my husband. The entire staff, doctors, nurses, CNA's, cleaning staff involved us in a total collaborative effort...(#79)</p> <p>(29 % out of all comments)</p>	<p>...poor communication between admission to current stay, between staff members...(#345)</p> <p>...maybe a nurse should explain it when you are brought in...did not realize it was a medical journal...(#364)</p> <p>(5% out of all comments)</p>

Results *(cont.)*



Major themes	Positive comments / Compliments	Concerns
Journal	<p>...encouraged being organized with questions especially the actual time with the doctor can be limited and it is often difficult to think right on the spot...(#18)</p> <p>...an excellent way to learn directly from the patient...(#21)</p> <p>...write down test results, discussions with various doctors, as well as their role in my care...(#44)</p> <p>...I could write when I couldn't speak...(#333)</p> <p>...it made me feel more in control because I felt prepared when I asked questions...(#398)</p> <p>...beautiful object, made me feel valued ...(#264)</p> <p>...afforded me a clearer way through the maze of post op surgery anxiety and the transition to my rehab stay practically without a snag...(#666)</p> <p>(40% out of all comments)</p>	<p>...maybe the journal could be bigger or even on-line...(#10)</p> <p>...Never received the journal until discharge....(#20)</p> <p>...I was given the paperwork but not journal...(#37)</p> <p>(20% out of all comments)</p>

Results *(cont.)*



Major Themes	Positive comments / Compliments	Concerns
Hospital	<p>...I know being a resident of the Portland area, I am comforted knowing there's such a great facility as MMC in my back yard...(#4)</p> <p>...I have been in 2 other hospitals in the last year. There was no comparison to how good Maine Med was...(#79)</p> <p>...the kind of care I got while at MMC should be the care every hospital should have...(#112)</p> <p>(3% out of all comments)</p>	<p>...it's hard to get around the room, too many things like chairs, to get up and brush your teeth...(#57)</p> <p>...discharging a patient takes too long...(#95)</p> <p>...very noisy at times in the hallways... many interruptions from all the different staff...(#336)</p> <p>(3% out of all comments)</p>

Challenges and Learnings



Study including multiple tiers and units:

- Challenge: obtaining funding for large amounts of materials (i.e. journals, envelopes, copies.)
- Compiling and distributing the journal kits/educating staff: difficulty getting started
- Regular rounding on units to provide education.
 - Noted increase in survey response returns after rounding
- Numerous (19) on site stock inventories of journal kits for completeness and professional appearance.
- Multiple reminder e-mails.
- Challenge at the end of the study: changing the materials (i.e. removing the survey, letter, and envelope from the kit), but continuing the journal distribution with the instructions only
- Difficult to stop: surveys continued to be mailed to us almost one year after the closure of the study!

Research project spanning over eight years:

- Required ongoing current Research Ethics and Compliance Training (CITI= Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative) and annual progress reports to the Institutional Review Board (IRB).

Conclusions

- Using the Inpatient Journal improved patients' and families':
 - **communication** with doctors, nurses and other staff,
 - **involvement** with care **decision making and understanding** the plan of care, and
 - **partnering** with their health care providers.
- We recognize that after the start of the project electronic means of communication had increased, such as use of email, smart phones, blogs, tablets with app's. Electronic means of communication may be the future of journaling, especially for the younger generation.
- We did not analyze the overall cost of the project that spanned over 10 years. However, it is possible to claim that journals are a very inexpensive tool and a highly appreciated opportunity for the patients to express their experiences on many different levels – especially those encounters which are not often captured during a hospital stay in a busy acute care environment.

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Presentations and Awards



- MMC Annual Nursing Research Award 2008
- Poster Presentation: Magnet Research Conference 2009
- Magnet Evidence for re-designation
- ONME podium presentation 2018

- Future - Research article

- Patient Experience Leadership Advisory Council at MMC is interested in continuing and expanding the use of patient journals.



Questions?
Thank you!

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