Abstract

This quality improvement project evaluated the effectiveness of using scribes in the outpatient setting on patient and provider experience. A mixed methods approach with a convenience sample of voluntary patient participants scheduled for an outpatient appointment was utilized. Two primary care physicians volunteered to receive scribes. Four hospital corpsmen were selected and trained to serve in the scribe role. Experience was evaluated during the implementation of the scribes on the 1) patient experience via a pre and post implementation questionnaire, and 2) provider experience via a pre and post implementation questionnaire.

SPSS was used to analyze quantitative data. Results revealed a slight decrease of 0.18 mean patient satisfaction and overall patient experience. The providers’ experience improved with a 50% decrease in time spent after hours documenting in the electronic health record, enhanced engagement with patients, and improved work life balance. Clinic efficiencies improved with a savings of 13.88 minutes per appointment, and enhanced clinical and war time readiness for hospital corpsmen.

Although a small-scale project, the provider experience was strengthened when using scribes while patient experience decreased slightly. Future research, centered on the patient and provider experience, could be beneficial to organizations. The consideration of scribes could foster work life balance, retention, and wellness in this setting for providers. Further study of the scribe’s experience, especially considering the positive qualitative comments from the hospital corpsmen that participated as scribes during the project, could provide beneficial outcomes.

Keywords: Scribe, patient experience, provider experience, electronic health record (EHR), and outpatient