Improving the NUH Emergency Experience for Patients, Visitors & Staff

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Introduction & Background

The Emergency Medicine Department (EMD) at National University Hospital (NUH) handles approximately 450 cases daily, including life-threatening ones that require immediate attention. Working in a highly stressful and unpredictable environment, the department had to juggle patient care as well as communication with patients and their relatives. Due to multiple demands, patient satisfaction scores and staff morale were inadvertently affected.

Aims

The team aimed to improve:
1. Communication with patient relatives
2. Overall patient experience and satisfaction
3. Staff morale

Methodology

a) Improve Communication, Overall Patient Experience & Satisfaction

- Formed a team of Patient Relations Officers (PROs) & Dialect Interpreters
- Developed informative tools to educate patients about EMD processes and manage their expectations eg. P2/P3 Pictures of Service, P2/P3 Patient Information Pamphlets, P3 Service Video & Financial Counselling video
- Made waiting experience more bearable by providing blankets, reading materials and snacks at regular intervals

Figure 1. Recruitment advertisement for Dialect Interpreter

Figure 2. P3 Pictures of Service displayed in P3 Waiting Area

Figure 3. P2 & P3 Patient Information Pamphlets
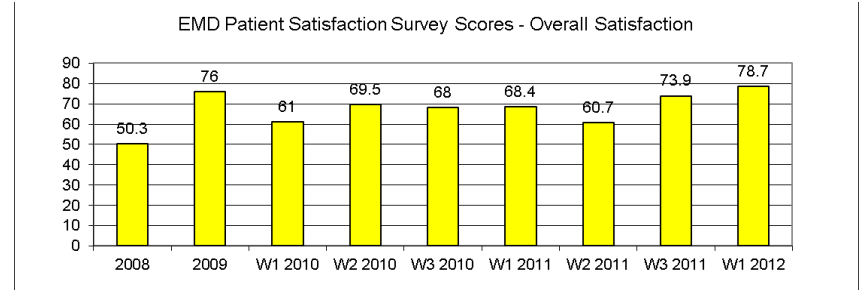
b) Improve staff morale

- Staff engagement through customised training, service energisers and monthly huddles
- Providing snacks for staff during peak periods
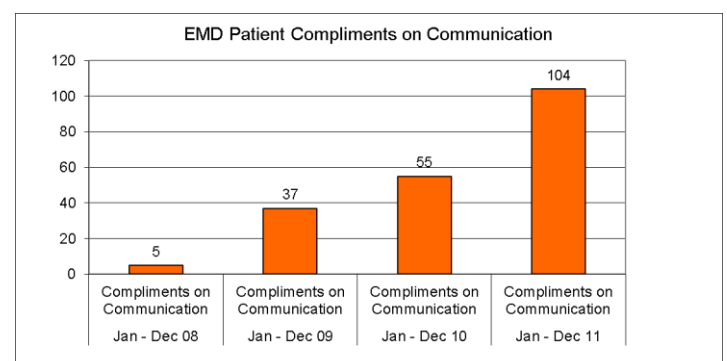- Celebrating staff who delivers excellent service through an "EMD Stars of the Month" Board

Figure 4. EMD Stars of the Month poster

Results

- Patient Satisfaction Score improved from **50.3% to 78.7%**

EMD Patient Satisfaction Survey Scores - Overall Satisfaction

	2008	2009	W1 2010	W2 2010	W3 2010	W1 2011	W2 2011	W3 2011	W1 2012
Score	50.3	76	61	69.5	68	68.4	60.7	73.9	78.7

- "Clear Explanation by staff" rating improved from **72.5% to 93.4%**
- Number of compliments regarding communication increased from **5 to 104** per annum

EMD Patient Compliments on Communication

Compliments on Communication Jan - Dec 08	Compliments on Communication Jan - Dec 09	Compliments on Communication Jan - Dec 10	Compliments on Communication Jan - Dec 11
5	37	55	104

Conclusion

Any EMD experience is, by nature of its acuity and urgency, a difficult one; but with these improvements, the NUH EMD experience is now less stressful for patients, relatives and staff.