

Discharge Dash: Speeding Up Summaries in a Flash!



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BACKGROUND

There is a growing backlog of delayed discharge letters on the Acute Admissions Unit, which may lead to safety concerns as important, time-sensitive information about patients' ongoing care could be delayed or missed.

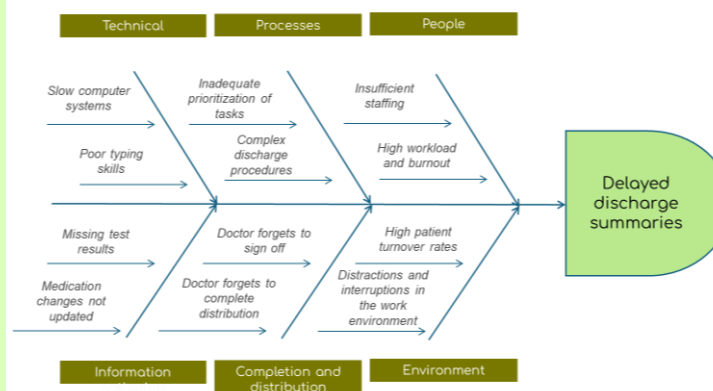
Patients may become frustrated due to confusion around their health condition, medication changes, follow-up appointments, safety advice, and lifestyle recommendations. Additionally, follow-up care with the GP could be delayed, further impacting patient outcomes

PROBLEM

Delayed discharge summaries in the acute admissions unit are piling up, creating backlogs that can take weeks to reach GPs. This results in anxious families, disrupted patient care, and potential safety risks.

DIAGNOSTICS

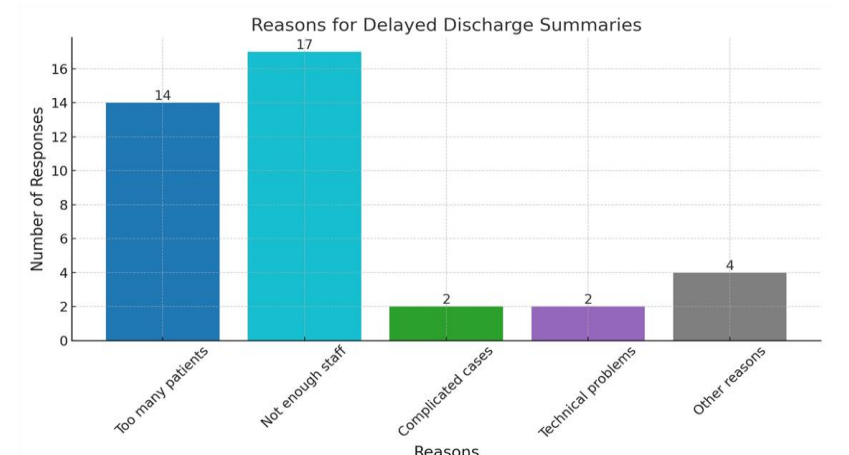
Fishbone diagram



Process Map for Discharge Summaries in the Acute Admissions Unit



Reasons for Delayed Discharge Summaries



Other reasons: Information gathering/ Completion and distribution

AIM & MEASUREMENT DEFINITION

Aim

By the end of August 2024, ensure that at least 90% of discharge summaries from the acute admissions unit are delivered to General Practitioners (GPs) within 48 hours of patient discharge. Delays beyond 48 hours should be limited to exceptional cases only.

Chosen measure

Daily count of discharge summaries delayed >48 hours

Inclusions

All medical patients discharged from the acute admissions unit.

Exclusions

Patients transferred to other units

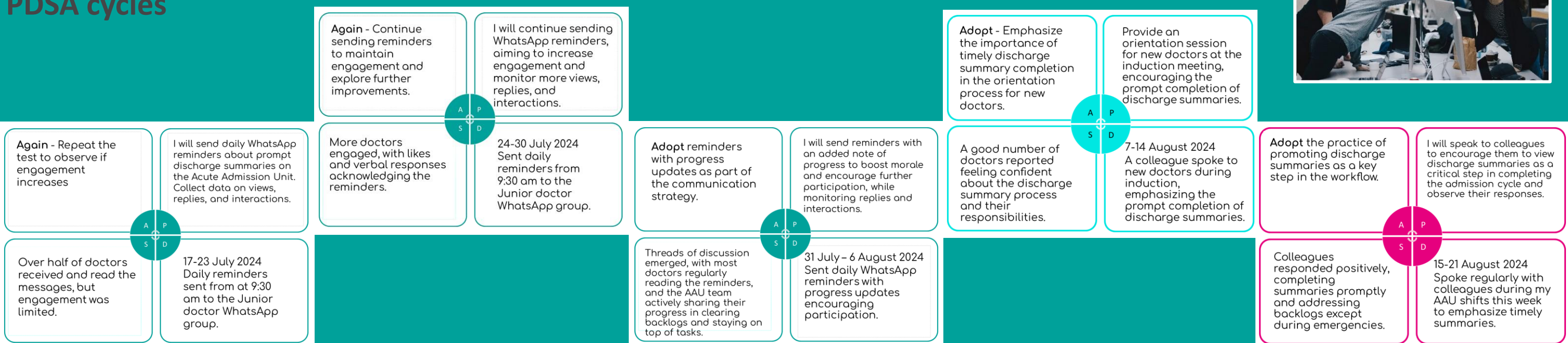
Sampling method and frequency

Daily counts

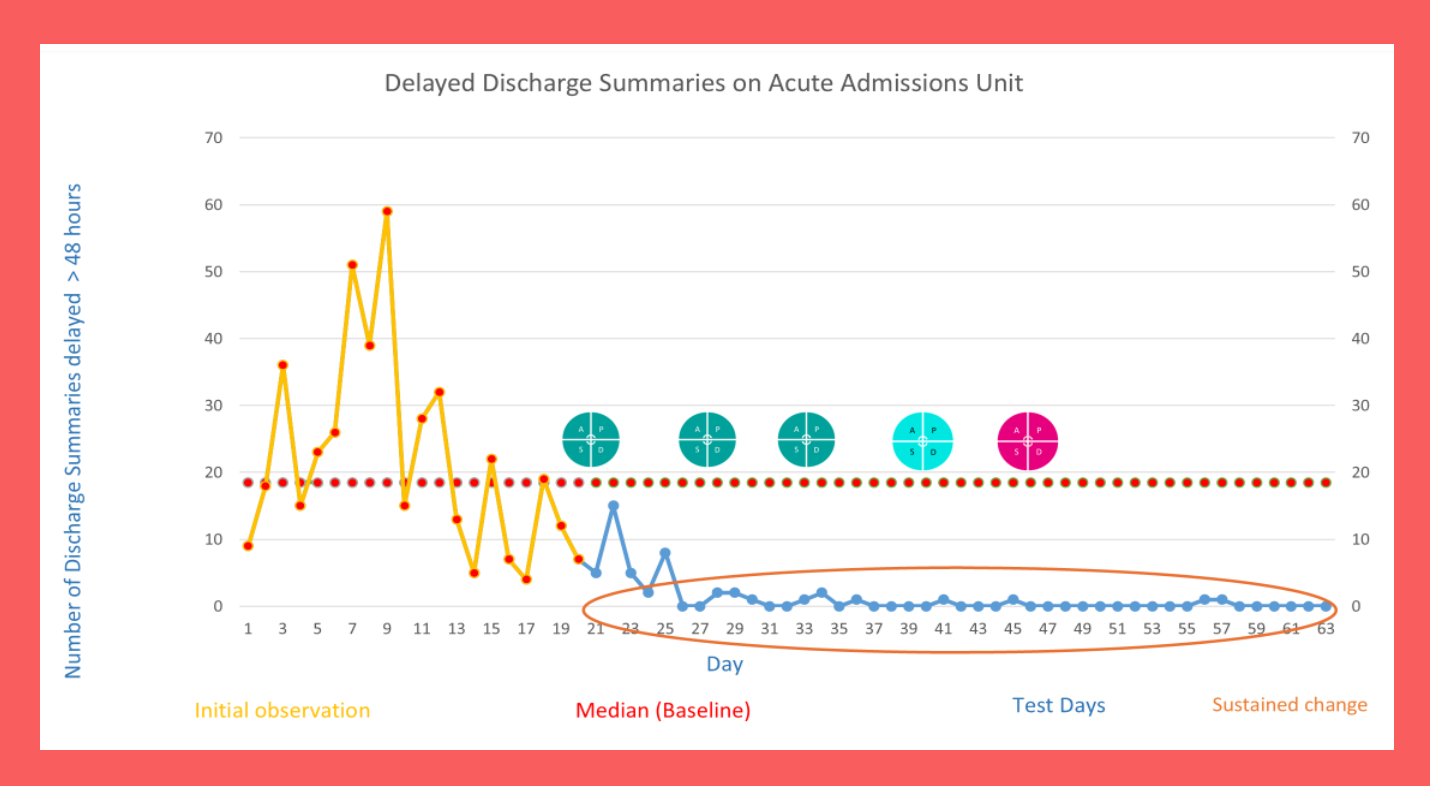
CHANGE IDEAS

- Automate the discharge process so that a patient cannot be electronically removed from the current patient list unless a discharge summary is completed.
- Daily WhatsApp message reminders and track the number of discharge summaries completed each week.
- Discuss challenges with discharge summaries during a weekly huddle and aim to reduce the number of incomplete summaries by the end of the week.
- Orient new doctors to ensure they understand and can efficiently complete discharge summaries.
- Implement a weekly reward system for teams that meet discharge summary completion targets.

PDSA cycles



RUN CHART



REFLECTIONS & LEARNING

CONCLUSION & LEARNING

The project aimed to ensure that at least 90% of discharge summaries from the acute admissions unit were completed and sent to General Practitioners (GPs) within 48 hours of patient discharge. This goal was successfully achieved. Although high patient numbers and limited staffing contributed to delays, raising awareness through WhatsApp reminders proved practical in shifting attitudes. As engagement increased, doctors became more focused on completing discharge summaries promptly.

REFLECTIONS

While addressing patient load and staffing was not feasible, the change in behaviour had a significant impact. Doctors responded well to reminders, managing backlogs and ensuring timely discharges. To sustain these improvements, automating the discharge process within the electronic health record—preventing patient removal from the ward list until summaries are completed—would reduce the need for manual oversight and ensure timely completion.

Acknowledgements:

Ms Lauren Jepson, Physician Associate, Department of Paediatric Medicine, Sheffield Children's Hospital

