Improving Critical Thinking at the Bedside

Catherine Garner, DrPH, RN, FAAN
Greenville Hospital System
Patient safety and effective care continue to be challenges in the acute care environment. The Healthcare Performance Improvement Institute (2012) evaluated data from 96 hospitals based upon nearly 2000 safety events and concluded that 55.7% of these were attributed to lapses in critical thinking.
• GHS is a five hospital integrated delivery system in the upstate of South Carolina
• A detailed study by Dr. Thomas Diller using the Human Factor Analysis technique tied lapses in critical thinking to 26% of errors reported through the system in 2011
• Anecdotal data suggest that bedside nurses are more absorbed than ever by tasks tied to the acuity of patient care, leaving less time for reflection and critical thinking
Intervention

• Eight week course for 14 Clinical Nurse Educators who serve as best practice coaches at the bedside

• Resource: Critical Thinking Tactics for Nurses: Achieving the IOM Objectives by Rubenfeld and Scheffer (2010)

• Activities: Readings, discussion, and weekly activities on the units at GHS
Outcomes

• Satisfactory completion required that each clinical nurse educator propose an intervention using the knowledge gained from the course to take back to specific units to improve the quality of care

• The intervention had to be tied to specific outcome measures
Sample Projects Underway at GHS

• Strategic management of change introduction
• CAUTI intervention program at the bedside
• Review of nurse compliance with policies on fall prevention
• Correlation of nurse staffing hours with quality of care indicators and patient satisfaction
• Nurse protocols for discharge facilitation
• Bedside report at shift change with patient participation
• Patient /family tool for discharge planning from admission
Findings

• Education with clinical nurse educators empowered the implementation of activities/ actions to improve critical thinking at the bedside

• Focus on a formal intervention with measurement allows for demonstration of effectiveness of the clinical nurse educator at the bedside
Collaboration

• Seeking collaboration with scholars on quality improvement initiatives which target nursing care at the bedside

• Offer clinical sites for research and quality improvement interventions for students and scholars interested in quality of care and improving critical thinking at the bedside
Questions