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Bringing innovation to stroke care: Development of a comprehensive stroke unit

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Much work has been done in the past 10 years to research and document best practices in stroke care along the continuum of care. The challenge now for stroke care practitioners is to turn those best practices into reality in a clinical setting. In spite of a general understanding and acceptance of the benefits to the patient, an organization's culture and limited access to resources can frustrate our best efforts to introduce best practices at the bedside.

Trillium Health Centre, a community hospital serving a diverse community of more than one million people, has turned best practice stroke care guidelines into reality by developing a 14-bed comprehensive stroke unit. This innovative approach to care uses specialized stroke teams, an interdisciplinary approach to care, and a single unit where the patient remains in the same bed throughout the acute and rehabilitation stages of care. Commitment to the new delivery model by formal leaders, informal leaders, and front-line staff, and a supportive organizational structure contributed to an expedited and successful implementation. All changes were implemented without an increase in the overall resources assigned to the unit. Early results show that the average length of stay is shorter than the national standard and that provider and patient satisfaction have improved.

The nursing role in patient education regarding outpatient neurosurgical procedures

By Claudia Zanchetta and Mark Bernstein

The shift towards patient-centred care is the priority in health care today. Providing quality care that is highly efficient and patient-friendly while also being cost-effective is a difficult, but not impossible task.

Since 1996, awake, image-guided day surgery for resection of brain tumors has been performed at Toronto Western Hospital in an attempt to combine the concept of patient-centred care with responsible resource allocation.

Nurses can play a vital role in facilitating a shift in outpatient neurosurgery towards a more patient-care focused environment. By providing information and education to patients and families, nurses have enormous potential to improve satisfaction and outcomes for patients undergoing these procedures. Thoroughly preparing patients for their surgery and helping them manage their care post-operatively are the keys to decreased complications and re-admission. This would undoubtedly improve cost-effectiveness for the system while simultaneously improving the patients' quality of life.