

Reducing Emergency Department Admission Wait Times through Utilization of Secure Chat Technology: An Innovative Approach Transforming the Oncology Patient Journey

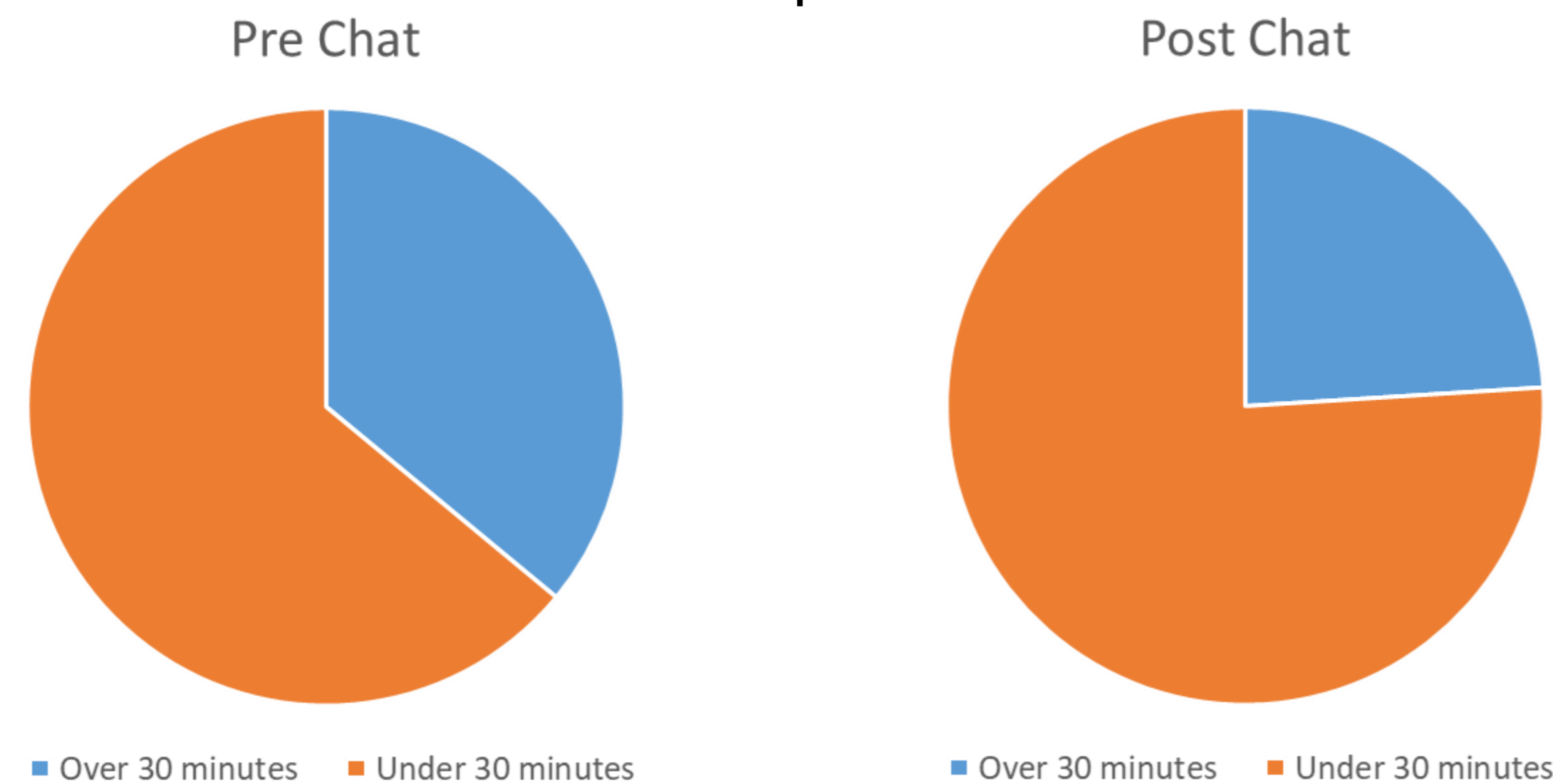
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Significance:

The oncology patient journey is often blighted by prolonged wait times. Prolonged wait times negatively impacts treatment outcomes and patient satisfaction. Innovative solutions that streamline the admission process and enhance the overall patient experience are essential. Technological groundbreaking strategies within the electronic medical record (EMR) have revolutionized real-time communication between health care providers and the patient flow team regarding patient disposition.

Purpose:

This approach leveraged secure chat as a mechanism to promote seamless communication of critical patient information between a health system's emergency department (ED) in a community hospital and an oncology specialty hospital. This communication method affords and expedited admissions process and elevates the care coordination for oncology patients, while incorporating the goal of decreasing the admission decision to accept time of 30 minutes or less.



Interventions

Clinical stakeholders, comprising of an ED clinician, inpatient medical hospitalist, and patient flow team, created a secure chat group. Once the decision to admit was made, a request is placed through the templated secure chat feature. The patient flow team member then acknowledges the request, while the accepting hospitalist reviews the request, and asks any pertinent questions to move forward with an acceptance or denial of admission. Next, patient flow asks any additional pertinent questions and after the patient is accepted for admission, the flow team follows through with appropriate bed assignment.

Admitting Patient: John Doe
#E123456 DOB: 1/20/1960
ED Attending: Mary Smith, MD
FCCC Oncologist: Lucy Chen, MD
Jeanes ED, Room/Bed: JE09/JE09
Admission
Diagnosis: Hyponatremia
Respiratory Support: None
BP: 120/53, **Pulse:** 79, **Resp:** 16,
Temp: 98.9 °F (37.2 °C),
SpO2: 95 %
Isolation status: none
Telemetry: Yes

Evaluation:

Analysis of the admission wait times prior to implementation of the secure chat group and post-implementation demonstrate an increase in number of patients, from 64% to 76%, that have an accepted admission within the 30 minutes from initiating the request.

Discussion:

Currently, the process is solely used with medical oncology admissions. Future expansion will include any admission across all emergency departments within the health system requiring oncology specialty care, regardless of service. Qualitative feedback can be collected via interviews with the clinicians and patient flow team, as well as patients assessing this vast positive impact in the oncology patient journey.

Multiple phone calls and connecting physicians resulted in admission acceptance delays. Integrating secure chat has pioneered an expedited communication and streamlined process for the unplanned, urgent oncology admission, coupled with a safer manner to do so. By leveraging technology, we have enhanced the patient experience, reduced wait times and facilitated clearer and more concise communication between health care teams.

