



A wireless way to cut out unnecessary walking

Ascom's **Mark Leppard** explores how nurses can reduce their number of steps during a shift.

Nurses are only spending about 30% of their time on direct patient care, yet they are at the centre of care delivery. They constantly have to multitask to the nth degree, which places a great deal of pressure on their capabilities and time.

So the question needing to be asked is – where is the rest of their time being spent? It is being spent on administrative tasks, managing the inflow of information coming towards them at any one time, resource allocation and going back and forth between patients. To manage these tasks nurses can walk an average of four miles a day during their shift; however most of this is due to not having access to information whilst they are on the move.

Nurses having to repeat their steps

If we were to look at typical scenario, one of many, of a nurse having to walk unneeded steps, the following would come to mind and most nurses would be able to relate to it.

1. A nurse is alerted to 'patient A's' need for assistance.
2. The nurse walks to the patient who requests their medication.
3. The nurse then walks to the medicine cupboard to get 'patient A's' medication.
4. Whilst on their way, the nurse is aware of another patient who needs their assistance.
5. The nurse walks to 'patient A' to provide them with their medicine.
6. The nurse then walks to 'patient B'.
7. 'Patient B' requests for a glass of water.
8. The nurse walks to the water station which in some cases is located near the medicine cupboard.

9. The nurse walks to 'patient B' with the glass of water.

All this is happening whilst they are dealing with not only one but numerous patient requests and tasks at the same time, all in different places and all requiring them to walk back and forth. This is an unnecessary and needless to say time wasting process; unfortunately all too common in a healthcare setting.

Reducing a nurse's footprint

The above scenario shows how information would flow to the nurse and how the nurse would go from patient to patient and task to task. Using this scenario we can now see how the number of steps can be reduced by implementing a wireless communication solution.

1. 'Patient A' uses their bedside nurse call button for assistance
2. Nurse receives an alert to their phone whilst they are on the move and speaks to 'patient A' directly who requests their medication.
3. The nurse walks to the medicine cupboard and receives another alert from 'patient B' who requests a glass of water.
4. The nurse collects the medicine and water and walks to 'patient A' to give them their medicine.
5. The nurse then walks to 'patient B' to give them their water.

Again all of this is happening at the same time as they are receiving other alerts, messages and calls directly to their phone, whilst they're on the move; saving time and increasing efficiency.

A wireless solution

By looking at this particular scenario, where a wireless communication solution is not used and then comparing it to the same scenario where such a solution is used, you can already see that the number of steps taken can be significantly reduced. The nurse could be anywhere at any moment in time and the communication is brought to them.

More and more hospitals understand the need for two-way communication between their staff and patients and with the use of wi-fi in hospitals increasing year-on-year, hospitals are starting to utilise this platform to tag their communication solutions on to.



It's all about improving efficiency, productivity, workflow, overall patient care and completing a patient's request; wireless communication solutions can do just this. Ascom, leading experts in integrated wireless communication solutions understand these workflow processes and tailor make their solutions around them; providing big benefits for the nursing environment and in this case can reduce the number of steps a nurse takes.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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