

# Improving the Discharge Process at Temple University Hospital: A Pilot Program

A Karanam, MD MPH, A Matsko, MD, M Presbery, MD, P Nakagami, MD, S Bagchi, MD, S Mishra, MD, A Stack, DO, S Stern, MD

Department of Internal Medicine, Temple University Hospital, Philadelphia, PA

## Background

- Discharging patients from the hospital is a complex and challenging process that involves over 35 million hospital discharges annually in the United States
- 14% of patients who are discharged from a hospital are readmitted within 30 days
- Readmissions profoundly impact the morbidity and mortality of our patients, but also have a costly adverse effect on our health care system
- patients' health literacy, discharge instructions, and medical provider factors as determinants of readmission
- Our project hoped to develop a discharge template to improve the discharge process

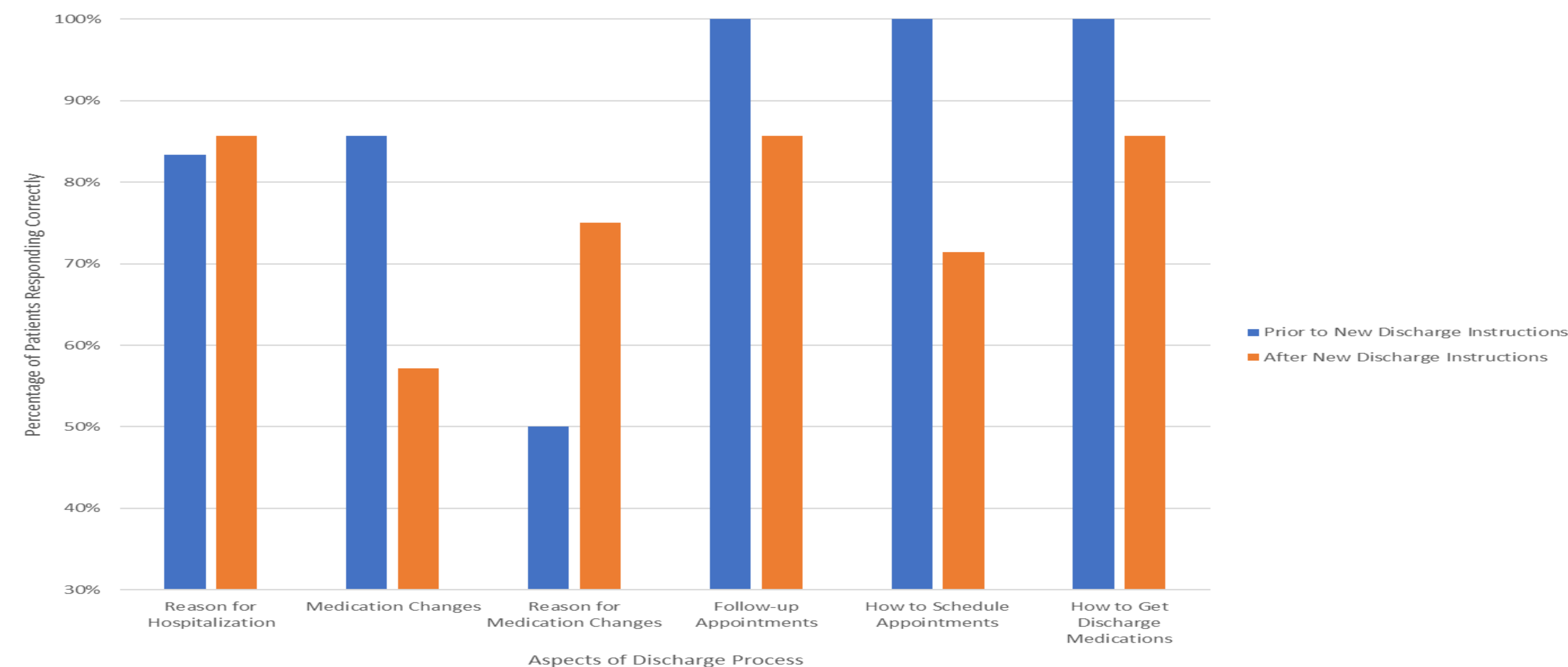
## Methods

- Patients, nurses, resident physicians, and attending physicians were surveyed to discuss areas to improve discharge instructions and a discharge template was created based on this feedback
- Patients admitted to the general medicine service were surveyed to assess their understanding of the discharge instructions provided to them and their satisfaction with the discharge process prior to and following implementation of the discharge instructions template

## Results

- A total of 15 patients (8 before intervention, 7 after intervention) were surveyed
- Proportions were obtained for Yes/No questions, and Fisher's Exact test was performed
- There was a slight increase in the proportion of patients that knew why they were hospitalized and an increase in the proportion of patients that knew why changes to their medications were made
- The proportion that knew that changes were made to their medication list, that knew about follow-up appointments, and that knew how to schedule follow-up appointments actually decreased after implementation of the new discharge template
- No results approached statistical significance

Figure 1: Percentage of Patients Understanding Different Aspects of the Discharge Process



## Discussion

- We attempted to create a new discharge instruction template to be used to improve the discharge process at our institution, based on concerns and feedback from patients, nurses, and physicians
- While not statistically significant, the results do indicate that a modification to the discharge instructions may impact patients' understanding of their hospital course

## Next Steps

- A project with a larger sample size should be attempted to see if a standardized discharge instruction template designed based on patient and clinician feedback can improve patients' understanding of their hospitalization and medications and improve patient satisfaction