



Teach-back Method: A Tool for Providing Discharge Instructions in the Emergency

Department to Address Health Literacy

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Introduction & Background

- Health literacy describes the necessary skills people require to access, understand and utilize health information effectively.
- The ability to utilize health information affects the degree to which consumers can understand and follow information regarding medication use, clinic follow up and self-care strategies [2].
- 60% of adult Canadians experience low levels of health literacy, meaning the majority of the population experiences difficulty finding, comprehending and acting on health information and services [2].
- The teach-back method is a way in which emergency nurses can optimize patient understanding of health information and discharge instructions prior to leaving the Emergency Department (ED) [5].
- This technique will support emergency nurses when teaching patients and family with the goal of improving patient understanding of discharge instructions and decreasing preventable return visits [1,3,4,5,6].

Objective(s)

- The objective of the project was:
 - To improve the knowledge and capacity of 30 ED nurses at Toronto Western Hospital in using the teach-back method at the time of discharge.

Methodology

- Program planning
 - Environmental scan
 - Literature Review
 - Collaboration with Patient and Family Education Program
- Intervention
 - Informal staff education on principles of health literacy and teach-back method
 - In-service and one-on-one education
 - Information summaries via email
- Program Evaluation
 - Post-then-pre knowledge survey

Results

- Results shown are from post-then-pre survey data using likert scale and open-ended questions.
- Data is reported as weighted averages.
- The following questions were asked:
 - Rate your knowledge of health literacy and teach-back on a scale from 1 to 4 (Figure 1)
 - On a scale from 1 to 10, how convinced are you that it is important to use teach-back? (Figure 2)
 - On a scale from 1 to 10, how confident are you in your ability to use teach-back? (Figure 3)
 - In what ways will you incorporate what you've learned into clinical practice?
- 36% of ED nursing staff (40/110) received informal education about the teach-back method and health literacy principles (Table 1).
- Staff knowledge about health literacy increased by 30% and the teach-back method by 33% (Figure 1).
- Staff conviction of importance of using teach-back in clinical practice increased by 20% (Figure 2).
- Staff confidence in ability to use teach-back in clinical practice increased by 20% (Figure 3).

Qualitative feedback from staff on the post-then-pre survey demonstrating knowledge gain included:

“Use this [technique] when patients are being discharged and document their understanding of discharge instructions”

“Ensure to use more open-ended and less yes or no questions”

Table 1: ED Staff that Received Education

Profession	Number of Staff
Physicians	44/70
Registered Nurses	40/110
Advanced Practice Nurse	6/8
Physician Assistant	1/1

Figure 1

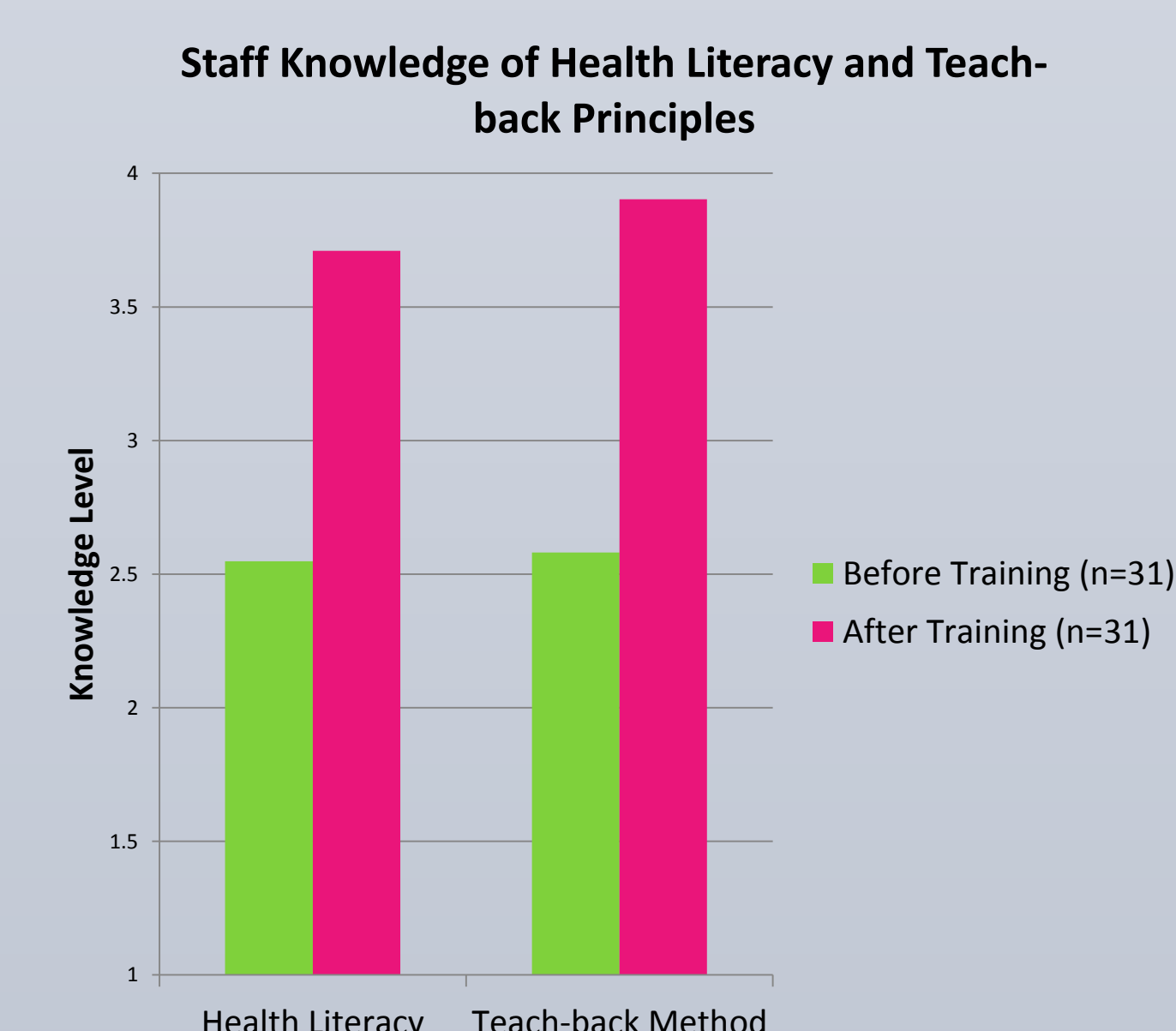


Figure 2



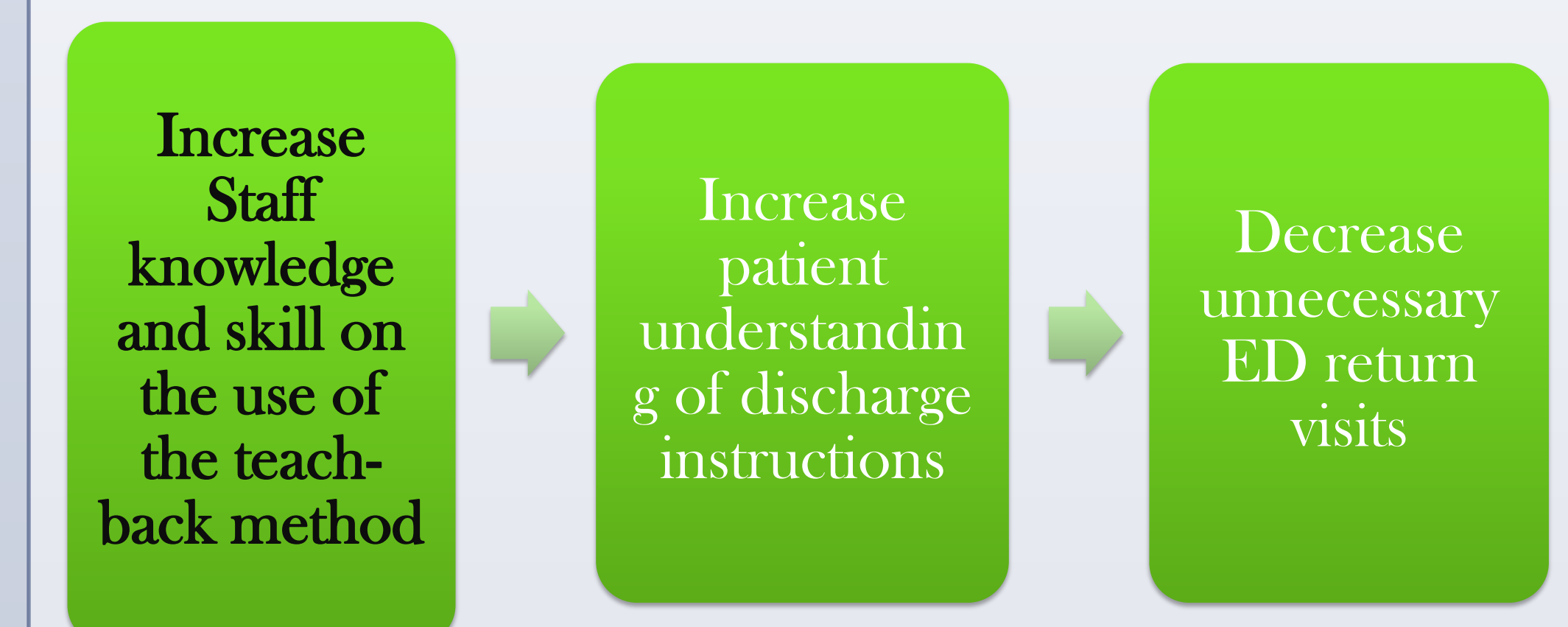
Figure 3



Plan for Sustainability

- Recommend nurse leadership (managers, educators, PCC) include education about teach-back in annual staff professional development and orientation.
- Visual reminders throughout the ED, such as posters and checklists.
- Capitalize on role modeling by early adapter staff.

Project Impact



Future Recommendations

- Future research could look at nurse and patient experiences of giving and receiving teach-back, respectively.
- Continued monitoring of use of the teach-back method in clinical practice.
- Development of patient friendly printed materials to support education.

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