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International Conference on

Health Care and Neuroscience

April 08-09, 2019 | Zurich, Switzerland

## A team approach to using the synergy patient characteristic tool to inform staff assignments on an In-patient ABI Rehabilitation unit

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**Background:** Synergy is a model of care which considers the patient's needs, the staff competencies and the environment in order to optimize the quality of care. Synergy was developed by the American Association of critical care nurses as a way of quantifying patient needs in order to optimize care. At Hamilton Health Sciences extensive work has gone in to customizing the Synergy tools so they accurately reflect the population served. A standardized patient characteristic tool was developed. This tool was then trialed on several units across the hospital. This case example illustrates how it was used in a unique way on the ABI unit to assign care based on team scores instead of individual scores.

**Method:** A lean six sigma approach was used to describe the current state of how staff assignments were done (i.e. how staff are assigned a caseload of patients); identify gaps and opportunities and; to implement the new Synergy model to inform staff assignment. Pre and post implementation data was collected to track: staff satisfaction; time to complete assigning process; and perceived workload.

**Conclusion:** Results show dramatic improvement in time to complete staff assignments from 3 hours down to 30 minutes. Staff satisfaction was tracked in 15 domains and significant improvements were noted in 11 of those. Additionally the perceived workload improved from 40 % reporting and unsafe or unmanageable caseload pre-implementation to 21% of staff reporting an unsafe or unmanageable caseload on a given day. These results suggest significant merit in this approach to assigning care.

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