Implementing an Integrated Pathology Report for Consultation Cases

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Abstract

Approximately 67,000 consultation cases are reviewed annually by pathologists at Mayo Clinic, and 16% of these cases are generated from the outside diagnosis of AP, with a large demand for consults. The practice has been a consultative letter to the client along with the official pathology report. New initiatives were implemented in an effort to streamline this process and improve efficiency. The team identified areas of improvement through a review of existing processes. An initial pilot was conducted to test the feasibility of the proposed changes. The pilot included a letter and report generated from a computer program. This work led to a new integrated report, which is now utilized in the consultation process. The results of the study demonstrated a significant improvement in efficiency and satisfaction with the new process.

Introduction

The Department of Anatomic Pathology (AP) at Mayo Clinic, Rochester, Minnesota, is a world-renowned service providing pathology consultation with over 30,000 specialist cases. A large portion of consultation cases are generated from the outside diagnosis of AP, with a large demand for consults. The practice has been a consultative letter to the client along with the official pathology report. New initiatives were implemented in an effort to streamline this process and improve efficiency. The team identified areas of improvement through a review of existing processes. An initial pilot was conducted to test the feasibility of the proposed changes. The pilot included a letter and report generated from a computer program. This work led to a new integrated report, which is now utilized in the consultation process. The results of the study demonstrated a significant improvement in efficiency and satisfaction with the new process.

Materials and Methods

In response to an increasing number of customer complaints as well as higher staff training issues, the team began the process of creating a pilot program to address the issue. Initially, the team created a survey to assess the satisfaction of current clients with the consultation process. The survey was distributed to all current clients and included questions about the timing of delivery for the two report deliverables, the accuracy of the content, and the ease of use for the report. The results of the survey were analyzed, and the team developed a plan to improve the current process.

Results

The team reviewed preliminary abstracts from AP leadership in an effort to launch the process of creating a pilot program. The plan was developed in collaboration with the Mayo Clinic, and the pilot was conducted in March 2012. The pilot included a consultation letter generated from a computer program. The pilot was evaluated by assessing the satisfaction of the clients and comparing the results to the original process. The results demonstrated a significant improvement in efficiency and satisfaction with the new process.

Conclusion

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Protecting Personal Information

The team received preliminary abstracts from AP leadership in an effort to launch the process of creating a pilot program. The plan was developed in collaboration with the Mayo Clinic, and the pilot was conducted in March 2012. The pilot included a consultation letter generated from a computer program. The pilot was evaluated by assessing the satisfaction of the clients and comparing the results to the original process. The results demonstrated a significant improvement in efficiency and satisfaction with the new process.

Figure 1. Pathology Report and Consultative Letter

Figure 2. Consultation Report and Letter Workflow

Figure 3. Cause and Effect Diagram

Figure 4. Types of Reports Received for Surgical Pathology Consultations

Figure 5. Survey Findings

Figure 6. Integrated Pathology Report Pilot Data

Figure 7. New Integrated Pathology Report

Figure 8. Integrated Pathology Report Pilot Feedback

Figure 9. New Integrated Pathology Report

Figure 10. Results (continued)

Figure 11. Results (continued)