

An alternate level of care plan: Co-designing components of an intervention with patients, caregivers and providers to address delayed hospital discharge challenges

Kerry Kuluski MSW, PhD | Julia W Ho PhD Candidate | Lauren Cadel MSc | Sara Shearkhani PhD Candidate | Charissa Levy MHSc, BScOT, OT | Michelle Marcinow PhD | Allie Peckham MSW, PhD | Jane Sandercock MSc, OT | Donald J Willison ScD | Sara JT Guilcher PT, PhD

Objective: To co-design components of an intervention that aims to improve delayed hospital discharge experiences with patients, caregivers and care providers.



Methods: This study entailed working groups and co-design sessions utilizing World Café and deliberative dialogue techniques. 61 participants (patients, caregivers and care providers) in urban and rural communities across Ontario and a Patient and Caregiver Advisory Council participated in all stages of the research.

Results: Poor **communication** and a **lack of care services** were key challenges experienced during a delayed discharge.



Participants recommended a **communication guide** to support on-going conversation and understand the priorities of patients and caregivers.

Service recommendations included **getting out of bed** and **dressed each day**, addressing the **psycho-social needs** of patients through tailored activities and having a **storyboard** at the bedside to facilitate on-going engagement.



Conclusion: Our findings outline ways to **meaningfully engage patients and caregivers** during a delayed hospital discharge. Combining this with a minimal basket of services can potentially facilitate a better care experience and outcomes for patients, their care providers and families.



Implications for THP: About 13% of hospitalized patients at THP experience delayed discharge; in fact, THP uses **over 100 hospital beds** every day to care for patients experiencing delayed discharge. During this waiting period, the quality of care substantially declines. Implementing some of the simple strategies highlighted in our study will improve **continuity of care** and ensure **smoother transitions in care** for this large proportion of patients and their caregivers.



The full text version of this article can be found [here](#). For more information, please email Dr. Kerry Kuluski at Kerry.Kuluski@thp.ca.