

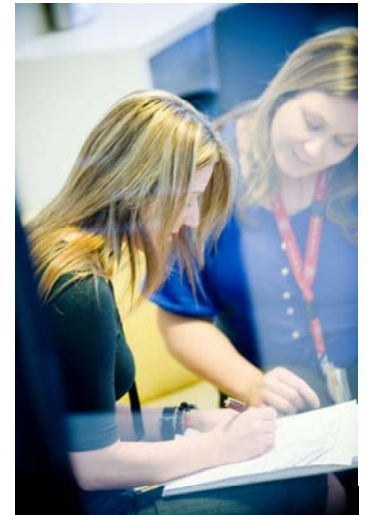
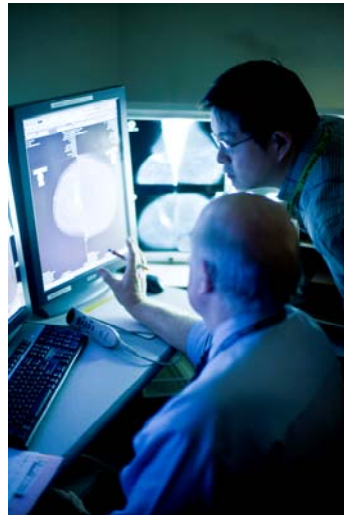
Teaching ethnography to empower clinicians to improve clinical handover

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Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care

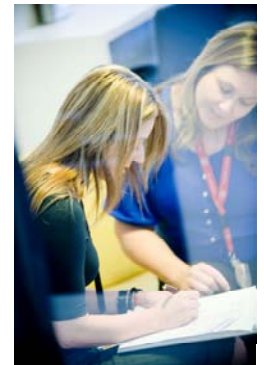
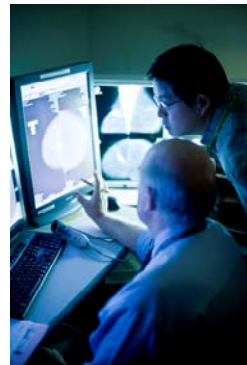
Jinah Kim, Shannon Lowcock, Clare Richmond

Royal Prince Alfred Hospital



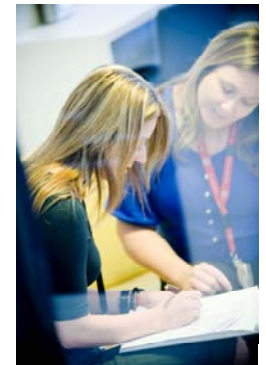
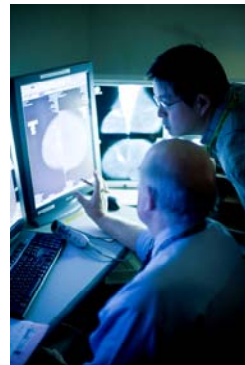
Introduction

- The improvement of clinical handover relies on staff a) identifying as a problem and b) being involved in the improvement process.
- Ethnography is a qualitative research methodology used to collect a wide variety of data through different methods, of which observation and interviews are the most common (Creswell 1998 (1)).
- Ethnography is an easy-to-use method of collecting data to improve local practice.
- Ethnography engages clinical staff in improvement processes.



Introduction

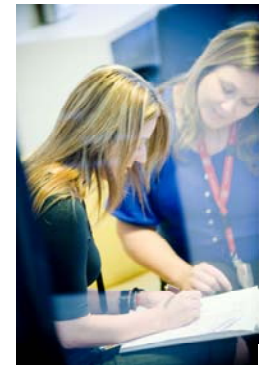
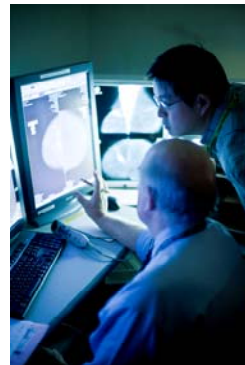
- Some staff are aware that handover can be problematic: “No matter where you go, handover is always a problem”
- Others see it as a time-consuming addition to their work rather than as essential to the delivery of safe patient care: “I don’t know any of my patients and I have to handover in a minute”
- It isn’t always given the time and effort it deserves – particularly as healthcare institutions are a complex and high-intensity workplaces.



Introduction

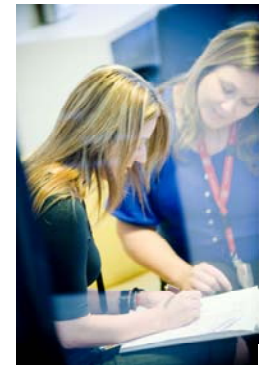
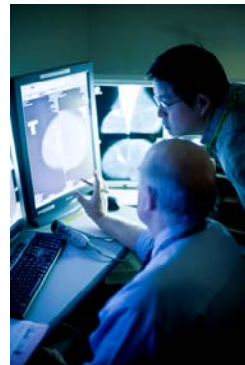
The objectives of this project are:

- to understand the clinical handover processes in the emergency department.
- to allow medical and nursing staff the opportunity to participate in reflexive learning.
- to allow medical and nursing staff the opportunity to improve clinical handover in their department.
- to provide contextual understanding for Commission staff to support the development and analysis of the National Clinical Handover Initiative.



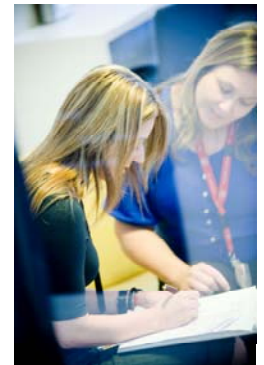
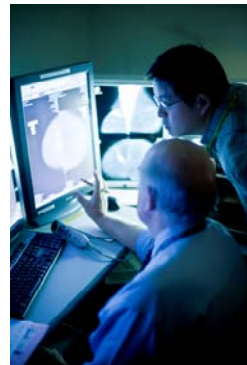
The Problems

- Little clinician involvement in quality improvement processes and lack of ownership of solutions : “So you’re going to tell us how to improve handover?”
- Two problems were addressed in this project: a) clinician engagement in improving handover; and, b) poor handover itself.



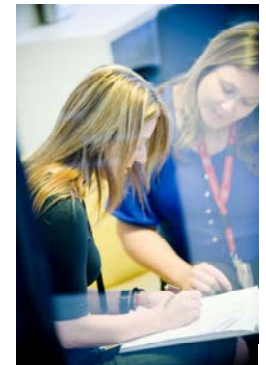
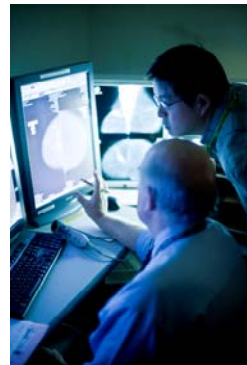
The Strategy for Change

- Much of the available literature on ethnography in health care is found in nursing studies: e.g. Barton 2008 (2), Simmons 2007 (3), and Kennedy 1999 (4).
- Ethnography has also been used in research on clinical handover, as in Philpin, 2006 (5).
- It is even claimed to have a history in medicine dating back to Hippocrates (Comelles, 2000 (6))!



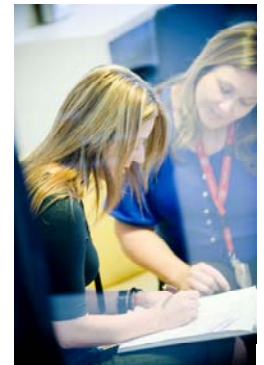
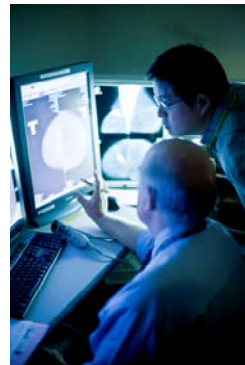
The Strategy for Change

- This project utilises this research as a background to improving staff awareness of what is occurring everyday in their department and giving them the ownership and the incentive to develop and promote change.
- Ethnographic tools were taught to 3 clinicians using information primarily from Creswell 1998 (1). Any general text on ethnography and how to use it would be appropriate to use when teaching.



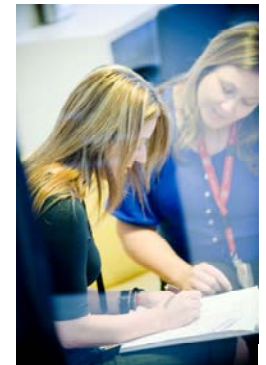
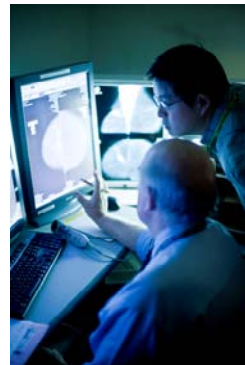
The Strategy for Change

- Staff showed enthusiasm for improving handover. As such three staff members were recruited to partake in the development of local solutions.
- From initial ethnographic observations, the Commission researcher developed a research plan.
- Ethnographic observation was used by the three clinicians and the Commission researcher.
- This methodology was used to engage the staff in developing an understanding of handover practices and the general environment and culture within their department. This was done through reflexive learning (Boyd and Fales 1983 (7)).



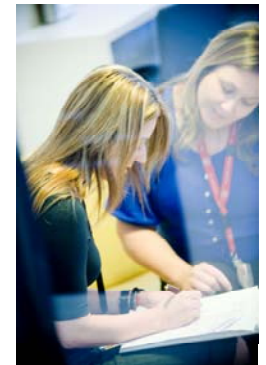
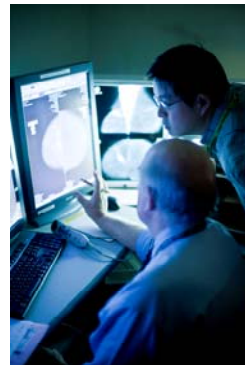
The Results

- From the observations, recommendations for changes in the department were made.
- These recommendations formed general guidelines written collaboratively by all four researchers.
- These guidelines were referred to in the development of the pilot projects.
- Three separate pilot projects were developed and implemented.



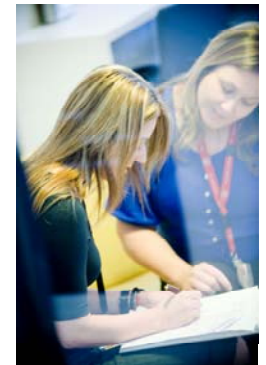
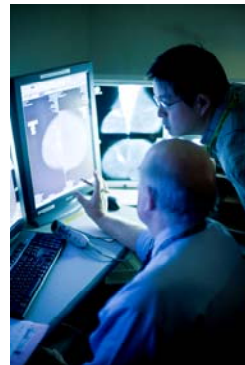
The Results

- Three pilot projects were developed:
 - The “Cowboy Round” – Clare Richmond
 - Improving whiteboard use – Jinah Kim
 - Improving formal nursing handover – Shannon Lowcock
- These projects were developed and implemented with little guidance from the lead researcher as senior staff within the department had shown enthusiasm in participating in the project.



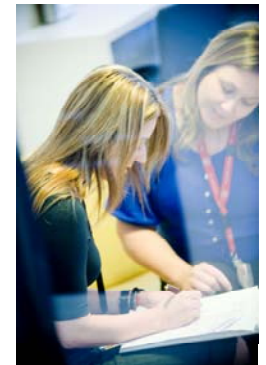
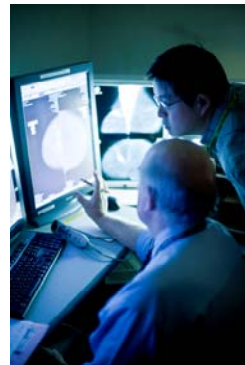
The Results

- Overall the project was successful as three pilot projects were developed and implemented primarily by staff within the department.
- The solutions were “owned” by the staff participants as they had developed them!
- The solutions were also targeted to specific problems within the department and were based on what was working in the department to improve what wasn't, such as the medical cowboy round, which was inspired by the nursing “walk around”.
- As they felt ownership of the solutions, the staff involved championed them in the department. They had a vested interest in the implementation of their solutions, much more than if one had been given to them.



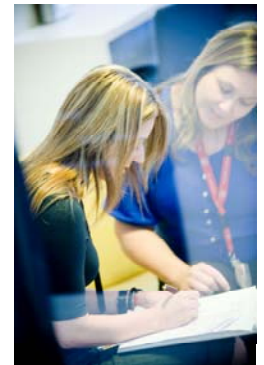
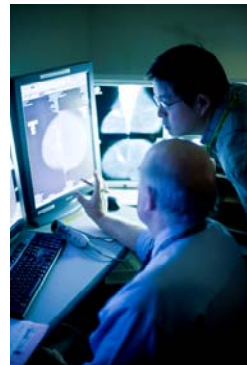
The Lessons Learnt

- **Validity:** As these solutions were developed by their colleagues, the staff in the department were more interested in them than in the SOP that was originally to be trialled.
- **Enthusiasm:** This validity and acceptance was also demonstrated by the enthusiasm that the senior staff had in the project, in its development and promotion. They then also took ownership of it.
- **Awareness:** The project created interest in clinical handover in general within the department. This interest made people aware of handover as a potential issue.



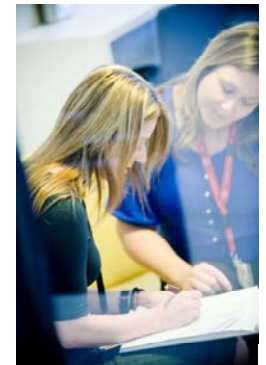
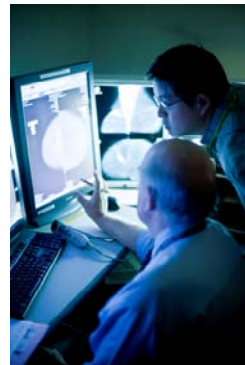
Conclusions

- Ethnography is a great way of engaging clinicians in quality improvement.
- It also helps in the development of tailored solutions that address local problems.
- Using this method for improvement doesn't mean that standard solutions can't be adopted, such as SOPs, but it ensures that the right problems are addressed and that staff are interested in implementing the changes because they too can see the problems through observation.



Conclusions

- The improvement of clinical handover relies on staff a) identifying as a problem and b) being involved in the improvement process.
- Ethnography is an easy-to-use method of collecting data to improve local practice.
- Ethnography engages clinical staff in improvement processes.



References

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Questions?

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