

Improving Communication Between the Residents and Consultants at HCA Florida Osceola Hospital

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Background

- Communication between healthcare professionals is critical to providing timely and effective patient care. ⁽¹⁾
- Currently, consultants at HCA Florida Osceola Hospital have different preferences for communication. These different preferences lead to confusion for consultees and frustration for consultants when communication/patient care is delayed. ⁽²⁾
- Primary teams and consultants need pre-determined modes of communication to reach each other when needed, especially when placing emergent consults or for follow-up questions.

Objective

- Identify the current communication barriers between hospital staff and consultants.
- Understand the reasons for these barriers and evaluate the impact of poor communication on patient outcomes.
- **Aim Statement:** Increase consultant communication satisfaction by 20% for new consults within a 6-month period. Increase resident physicians' level of satisfaction by 20% for communication with specialists within 6 months.
- Create a centralized database for consultant contact information that includes the preferred method of communication for each consultant.

Current Conditions

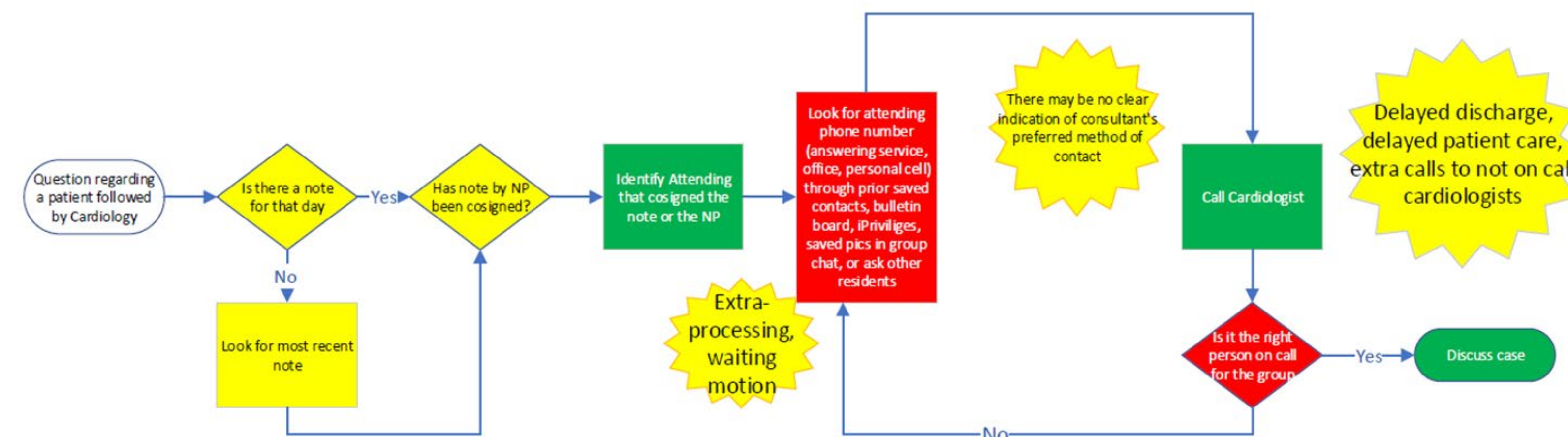
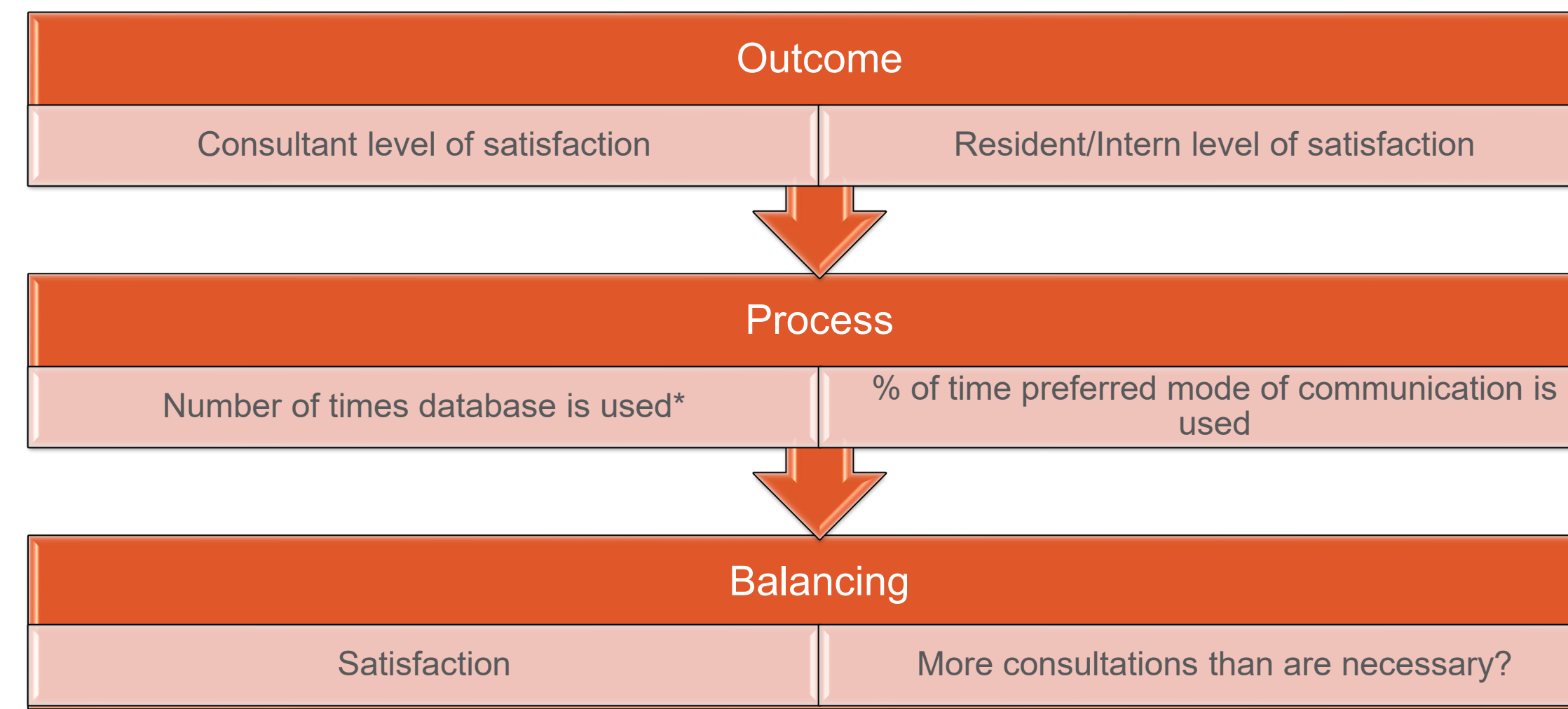
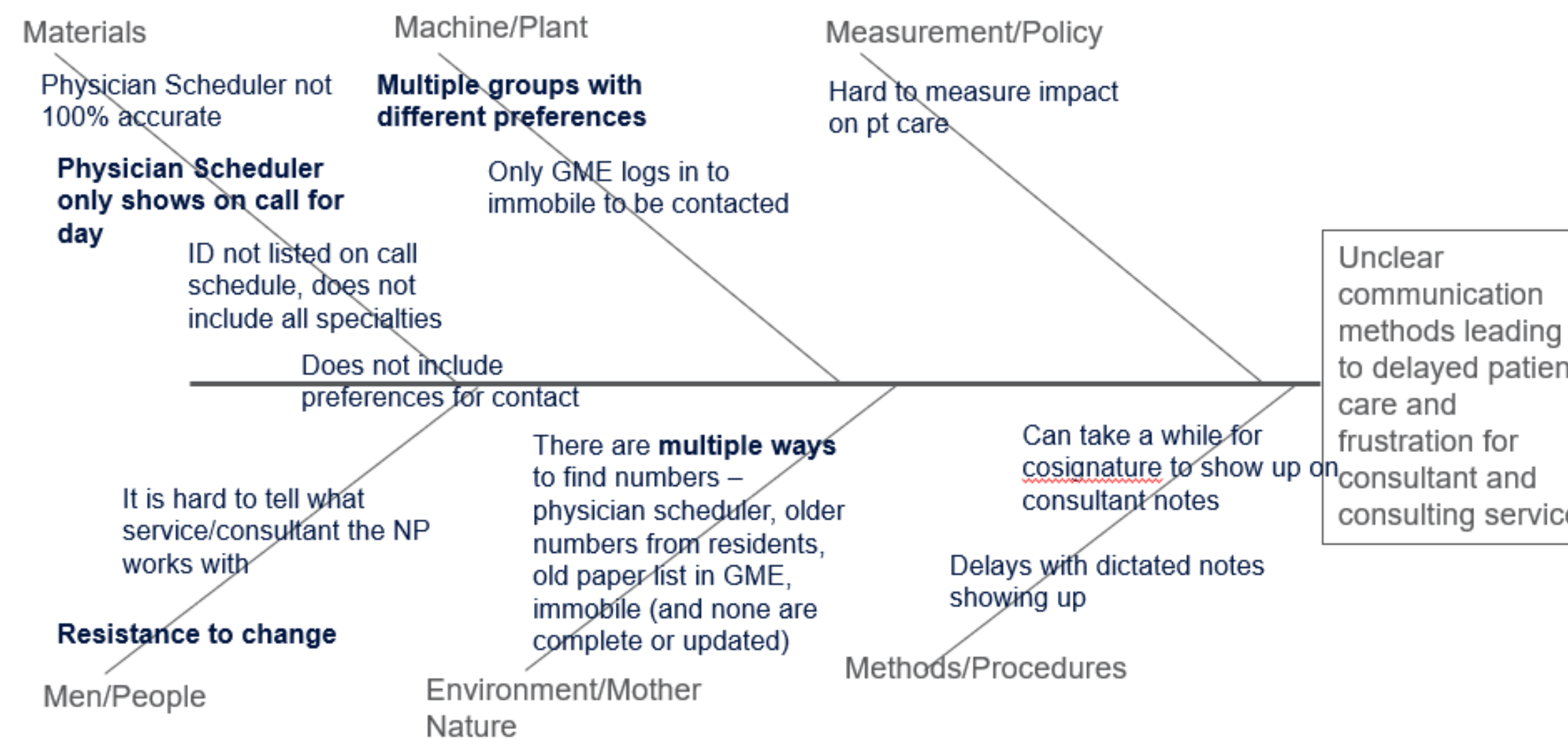


Figure 1. Sample Communication Process Map for Cardiology Consults



*This process measure was not possible due to difficulties acquiring this data.

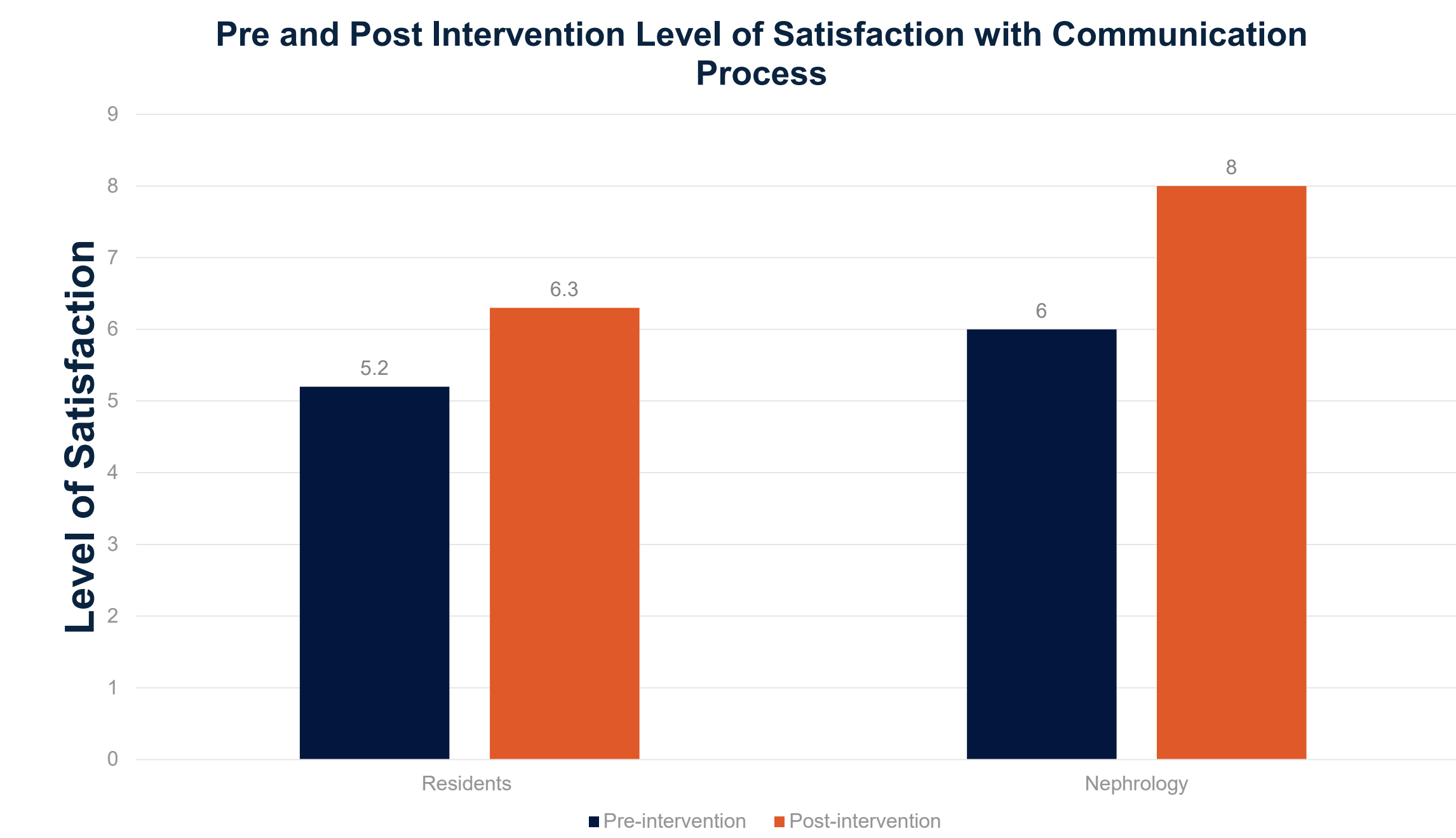
Root Cause Analysis



Interventions

- Involved administration including CMO to discuss the barriers.
- Nephrologists came up with a standardized protocol for how to contact them based on time and acuity. Residents were informed via email, text, flyers, and morning report announcements.
- Met with chief of cardiology to discuss preferred method of communication with each provider.
- A follow-up survey was conducted to assess satisfaction.
- A centralized electronic database for GME internal medicine residents was created with consultant numbers and preferred methods of contact.

Results



Discussion

- Standardizing and obtaining the preferred method of communication for consults to increase satisfaction levels proved to be more challenging than anticipated.
- Roadblocks were encountered during this project that included:
 - Obtaining survey responses from consultants and residents
 - Original website used for consultation was changed mid-project
 - Resistance to change
 - Could not create a new electronic platform for easy communication and consultation
- A centralized database was created for residents with the consultant's preferred method of contact and moving forward, chief residents will update database with new information as needed

Clinical Impact

- In the 21st century, the number of methods to communicate has expanded. Although direct phone communication may have been preferred in the past, busy specialists may find it interrupts tasks and ongoing patient care.
- Consultees and consultants need to be open to alternative methods of communication to improve contact and minimize disruptions. Efficient communication with consultants can save time and resources, reducing the burden on healthcare professionals, improving overall efficiency in the healthcare system and patient care. ⁽²⁾

References

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2. Lee T, Pappius EM, Goldman L. Impact of inter-physician communication on the effectiveness of medical consultations. Am J Med. 1983 Jan;74(1):106-12.