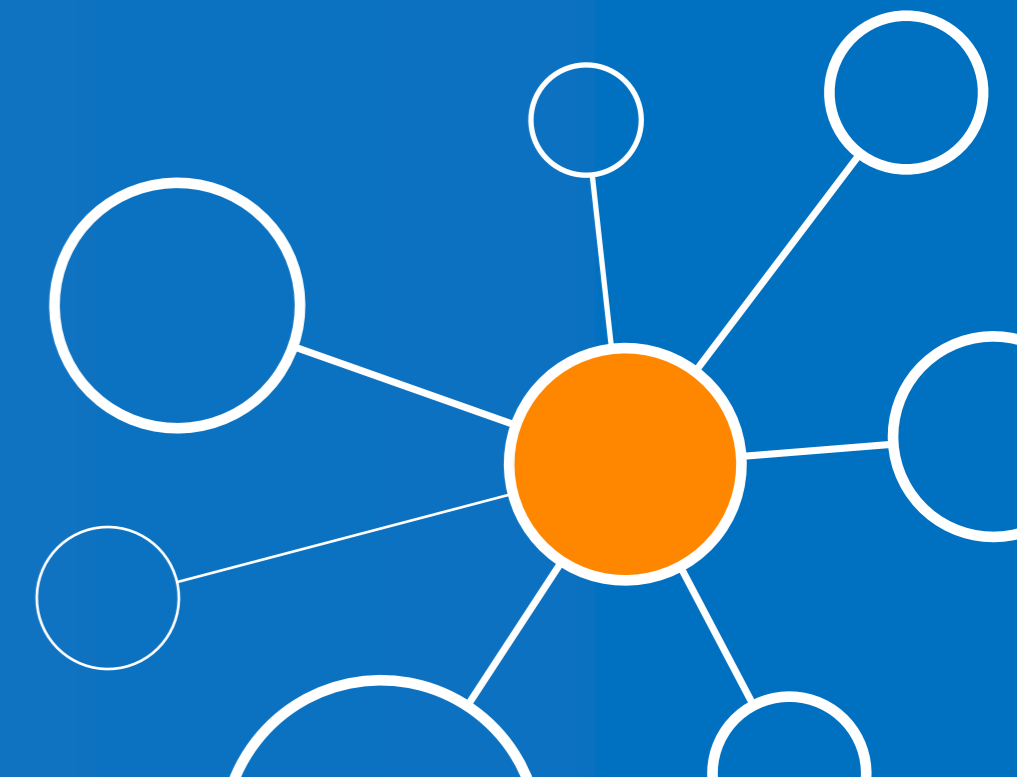


Improving handovers between the Birth Units and Delivery Suite

Emily Beach and Rose Mitchell



The Safety Concern:

- Poor use of current handover tool - 45% of audited notes (Dec. 2015)
- Ineffective information transfer contributes to unsafe care in maternity.
- Mum requested her story be used to improve care.

The Aim:

To improve the quality of handover of care when women are transferred from a birth unit to delivery suite. Handovers will be scored against set criteria; we aim to improve scores by 30% in the first three months following the introduction of a new handover tool.

Method and Measures:

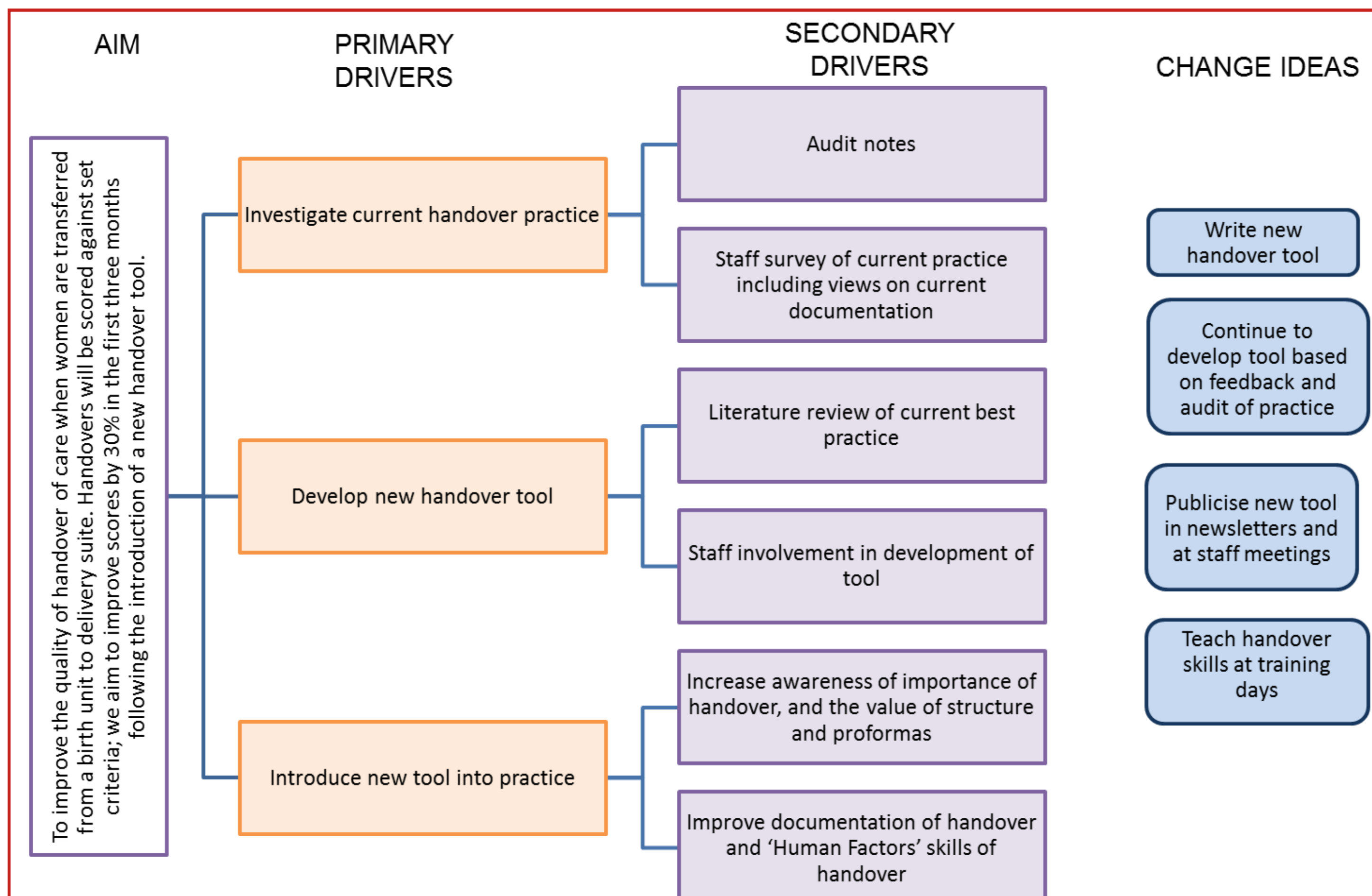
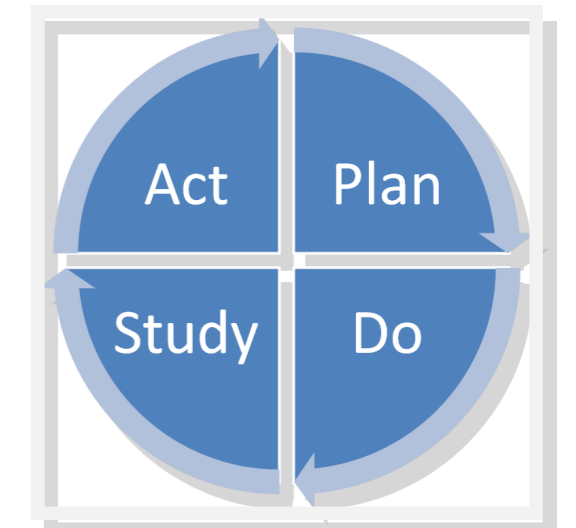


- Develop a new standardised handover proforma.
- Five criteria set to define handover quality
- Case note audit to score handovers pre and post introduction of tool
- Balancing measures: time taken to complete proforma, staff satisfaction
- Outcome measure: improve handover scores by 30% in the first three months following the introduction of the new tool.



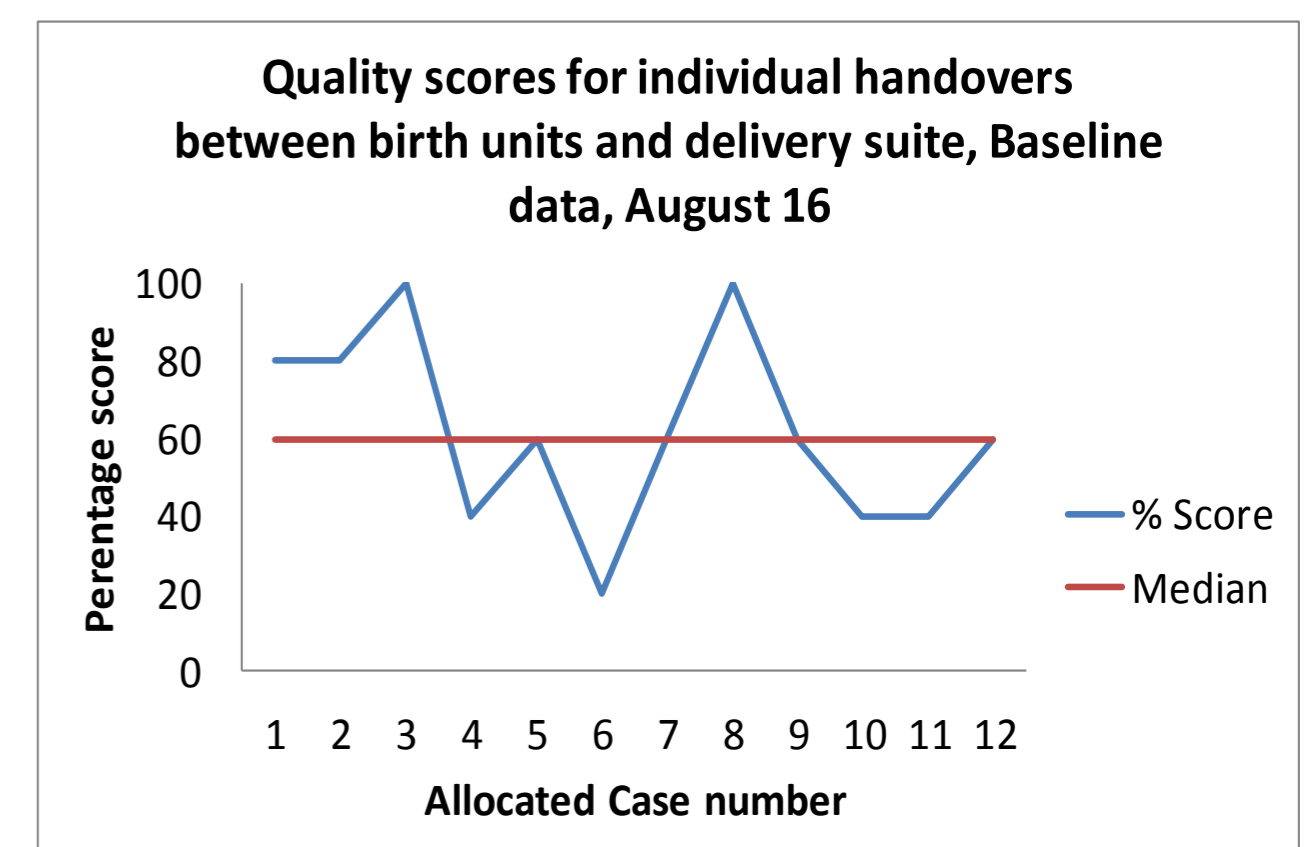
Key results:

- Project still in progress
- Inconsistent quality of handover at present
- Wide range of tools being used with varying levels of success



PDSA Cycles

- 1.) Survey current handover practices
- 2.) Develop new handover tool with staff and experts
- 3.) Introduce tool at team talks and newsletters
- 4.) Education on handover at mandatory study days



Discussion

It would be ideal to demonstrate that improving quality of handover improves clinical outcomes such as mortality and morbidity. However, this is unrealistic in maternity, both because we cannot pinpoint handover as a direct cause of better outcomes, and because poor outcomes are thankfully rare. Therefore it is more realistic to focus on measuring the quality of the handover itself, and assume that a better quality handover will lead to better information transfer, better care, and thus contribute to better outcomes.

A high quality clinical handover and an extensively documented handover are not necessarily the same. During the process of developing the new handover proforma we are discovering the importance of effective structured verbal communication. This underlines the importance of mandatory staff training in the diverse skills of handover.

