

Improving Documentation and Follow-Up for Peripheral Nerve Catheters: A Quality Improvement Project

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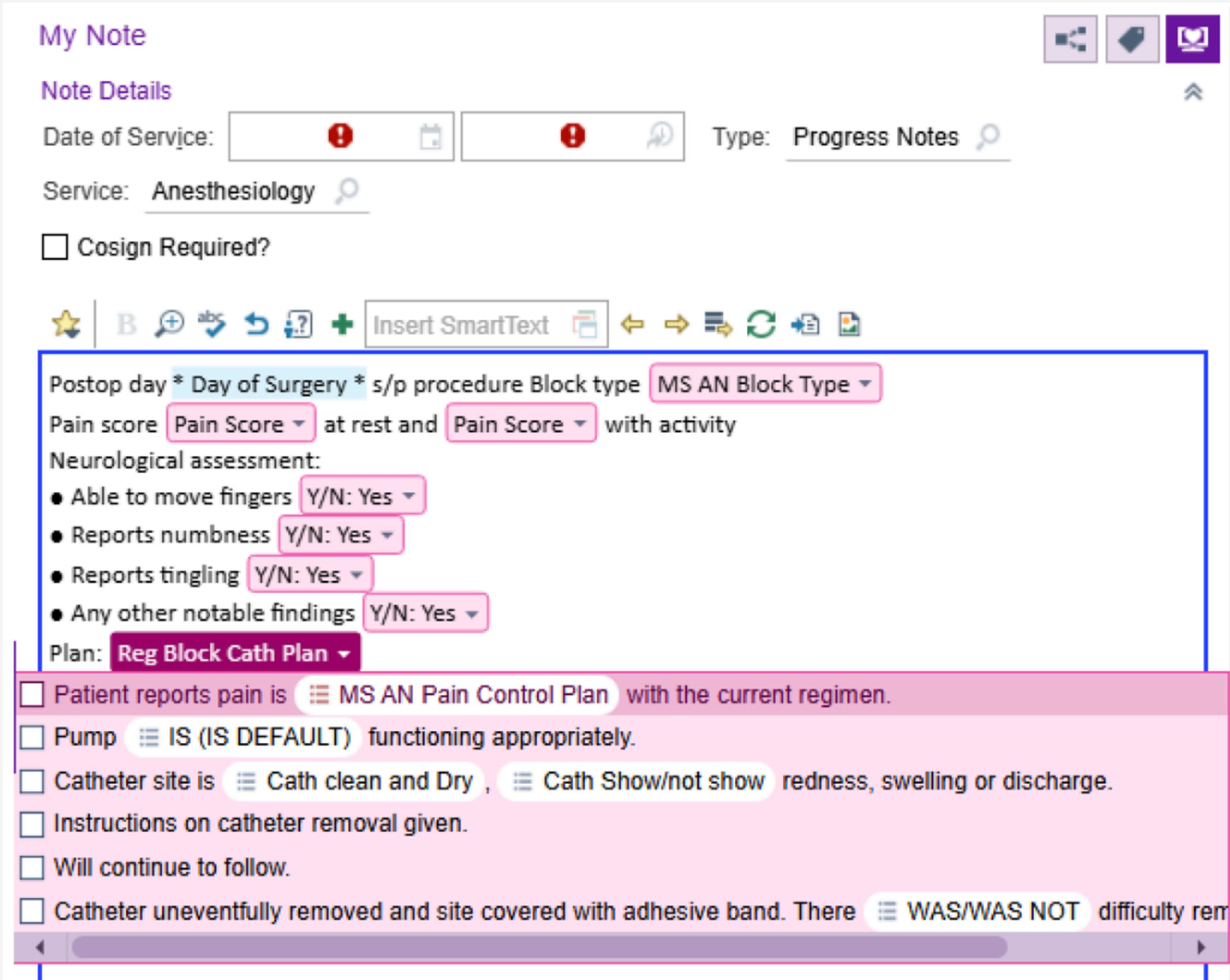


Introduction

Peripheral nerve catheters (PNCs) are commonly used for pain relief during and after surgery. Documentation of follow-up assessment and catheter removal is essential for patient safety. The goal of this quality improvement project was to improve patient follow-up documentation consistency for PNCs through the implementation of an adjustable standardized phrase in the patient’s medical record.

Intervention

- Intervention: Implementation of an adjustable standardized phrase in Epic Electronic Medical Record system used at Mount Sinai Hospital
- Shared template with attending physicians, fellows, and residents in the anesthesiology department
- Compared patterns in follow-up documentation in 50 patients before and 50 patients after introduction of the adjustable standardized phrase

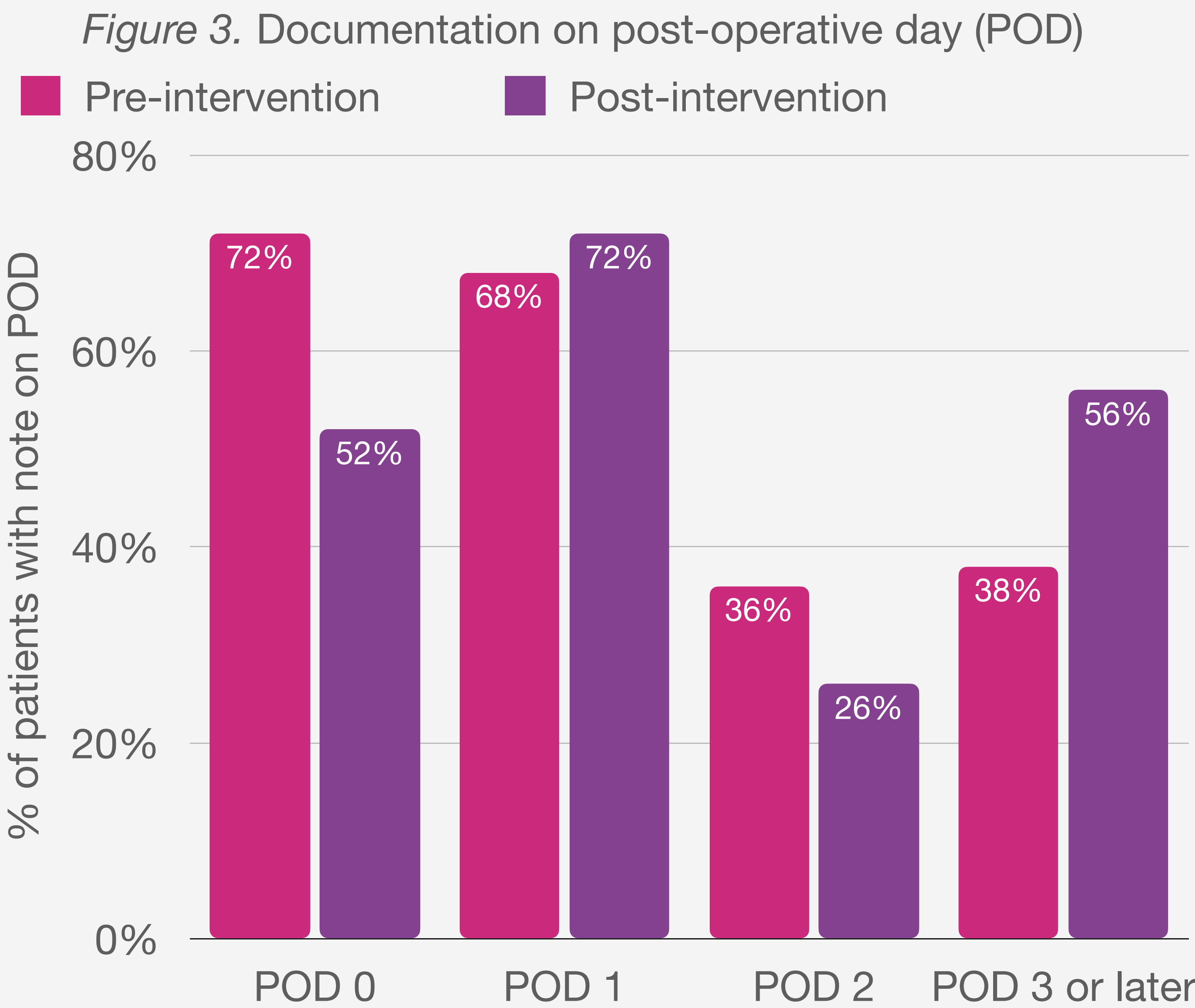
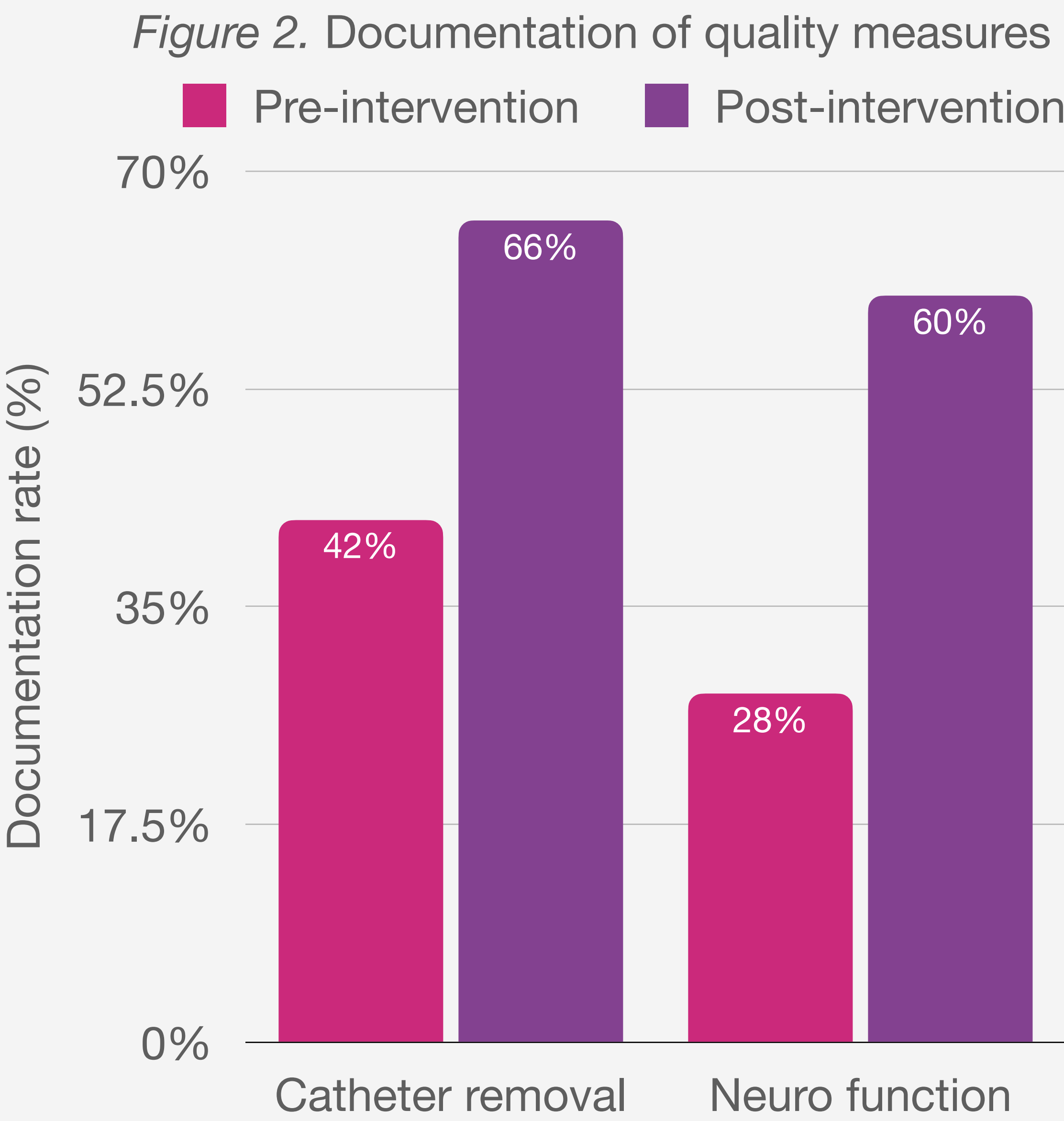


The screenshot shows a 'My Note' template in the Epic EMR system. It includes fields for 'Date of Service', 'Service' (Anesthesiology), and 'Type' (Progress Notes). Below these are checkboxes for 'Cosign Required?' and 'Insert SmartText'. The main body of the note contains a standardized phrase for catheter removal and neuro function assessment, with dropdown menus for 'Postop day * Day of Surgery * s/p procedure Block type' (MS AN Block Type), 'Pain score' (Pain Score), 'at rest and' (Pain Score), 'with activity' (Pain Score), 'Neurological assessment' (Able to move fingers Y/N: Yes, Reports numbness Y/N: Yes, Reports tingling Y/N: Yes, Any other notable findings Y/N: Yes), 'Plan' (Reg Block Cath Plan), and 'Patient reports pain is' (MS AN Pain Control Plan with the current regimen). The phrase is enclosed in a pink box.

Figure 1. Adjustable standardized phrase implemented in electronic medical records

Results

- Improved documentation of catheter removal and return of neurologic function
- Increased documentation on POD 3 or later, for duration of catheter placement



Discussion

The use of the standardized documentation phrase improved key aspects of follow-up documentation. Prior to the intervention, there was a higher percentage of physicians who entered routine post-operative notes immediately upon completion of the surgery prior to activation of the PNC. After the intervention, fewer practitioners completed post-operative notes on POD 0 and increasingly waited until they could document the effects of the PNC, catheter removal, and return of neurologic function.