1. Background
The unprecedented and sustained system pressures during COVID-19 have highlighted the critical importance of communication within and between teams.

Hospital Huddles, a key component of the Scottish Patient Safety Programme (SPSP) Essentials of Safe Care, support safe communication and situational awareness as part of daily hospital management.

This work aimed to explore the variation in huddles across NHS Scotland during COVID-19 and identify core elements to support teams to improve patient safety, patient flow and communication.

2. Methods
The SPSP Acute Adult team have worked with Scottish Government and NHS boards to understand the purpose, design and delivery of their hospital huddles. Data collection took place in three phases during COVID-19 (Oct to Dec 21):

- Reviewed 7 published templates
- Attended 14 hospital huddles in 6 NHS boards
- 10 huddle templates shared by 6 NHS boards
- Attended 2 Integrated huddles in 2 NHS boards
- 18 conversations in 4 boards with more than 30 staff

Following content analysis of the data the findings were constructed into the core elements of hospital huddles

3. Findings
The core elements of hospital huddles, are structured by the three points of huddle activity: pre-, in-, and post-huddle.

Pre-Huddle
- Pre-population of template or visual

In-Huddle
- Exception reporting
- Safety & Flow
- Situational awareness
- Look forward
- Huddle plan
- Problem solving
- Huddle report
- Whole system interface

4. Conclusions
Hospital huddles are an opportunity for staff to proactively identify safety issues and serve as a platform for problem solving. The core elements can support safety huddle improvement work in NHS Boards.

References

Acknowledgements

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Creating the conditions included: psychological safety, appropriate huddle membership, learning from integrated huddles, situational awareness and the use of digital huddles.