Utilizing Lean Principles to Improve On-Time Performance in the PreSurgical Department

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A multidisciplinary Lean team addressed delays with the first surgical case of the day. Delays into the operating room averaged 10 minutes. The team focused on factors leading up to surgery.

Patients were late into surgery because:
1. PAT was missing and not reviewed.
2. Patient had not been successfully contacted, so the Nursing History and Assessment and Medication Reconciliation were incomplete.
3. There was poor coordination of the surgical team on the day of surgery.

The purpose was to determine how the application of Lean principles would positively impact specific metrics leading to on-time surgical starts.

The entire presurgical process was improved by addressing the problems listed, matching staff to workload, choreographing the morning of surgery, and improving the visibility of patient flow.

Daily measurements were recorded: 1) PAT complete 2) patient interview complete 3) patient preparation complete 20 minutes prior to OR start. Day of surgery outcomes were measured using a computerized patient flow tracking system. Clear results three months into the project produced a 50% reduction of delay into OR with efforts continuing to drive on-time performance.

These principles can be reproduced in any presurgical department and will favorably impact day of surgery performance.