ABSTRACT: PACU Algorithms

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BACKGROUND: In 2008 our Medstar hospital introduced the SBAR format as the standard form of communication between the nursing staff and other medical teams. As senior staff members one problem became apparent to us. A large number of staff members in our PACU were either new graduates or had less than five years of experience. These nurses, while quickly able to address the situation, background and assessment were less confident in making recommendations to the medical personnel they were communicating with.

OBJECTIVES: PACU algorithms of common post-operative problems, such as chest pain, hypertension, hypotension, etc. were created to provide a quick reference guide. These were patterned after our ACLS algorithms. The objective behind creating the algorithms was to help our staff identify specific suggestions regarding what should be considered when requesting orders.

PROCESS OF IMPLEMENTATION: Our staff was educated on the existence of this resource, contacting senior resource nurses if they needed help using the algorithms.

STATEMENT OF SUCCESSFUL PRACTICE: New graduate nurses and new staff have used the algorithms to help resolve patient issues in an informed, confident manner, thereby expanding their problem solving skills.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PERIANESTHESIA NURSING: We believe these algorithms can be of benefit to PACU staff by improving the quality of care patients receive.