BLOCK NURSING: THE EMERGENCE OF A NEW NURSING SPECIALTY IN THE PACU
Team Leader: Katherine Gattis, MSN, RN; Kelly Boyd, BSN, RN
Duke University Hospital, Durham, NC
Team Members: Rebecca Russell, MPW, RN; Kimberly Burke, BSN, RN;
Kelly Boyd, BSN, RN; Katherine Gattis, MSN, RN; Sue Ellen Thompson, MSN, RN

Background information: In the past three years, there has been rapid expansion of our regional anesthesia team in an effort to provide peripheral nerve blocks to an increasing eligible population. This expansion suggested the creation of a system that would allow more pre-operative blocks to be performed while maintaining patient safety and increasing operating room efficiency.

Objectives of project: To develop and train a team of PACU nurses to assist anesthesiologists with the placement of regional and neuraxial blocks in the pre-op holding area, to educate patients on regional anesthesia, to monitor for procedural and post-procedural complications.

Implementation: Seven PACU nurses formed a dedicated Block Nurse team in a PACU pre-op holding area. A curriculum was developed to educate and train a regional anesthesia nursing specialty practice.

Statement of the successful practice: Over a period of a year, perioperative efficiency was shown to improve through increased turnover rates and no incidence of wrong-sided blocks.

Implications for advancing the practice of perianesthesia nursing: A curriculum and preceptorship is being developed utilizing ASPAN standards to teach the role of the block nurse within perianesthesia nursing. This program will focus on the advancement and increased role of perianesthesia nurses to extend the use of regional anesthesia beyond the primary operating room needs of our patients. Additionally, the preceptorship program will increase the capacity and size of our primary block nursing team, as well as educating nurses from other institutions on best practices for patients receiving regional anesthesia at any institution.