CONVERSION FROM PAPER TO ELECTRONIC DOCUMENTATION:
A DATA GAP ANALYSIS PROCESS
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Background / Problem Identification:
In information technology, data gap analysis is an assessment tool that can help identify differences between data captured in current paper or electronic information systems and data required for planned applications. A data gap is the “space between where we are and where we want to be.” The analysis process helps bridge that space by highlighting which data requirements are being met and which are not. Creating a clinical documentation design for the perianesthesia setting can be very challenging because of the need for an efficient, yet comprehensive, patient-centric documentation system; unique work flow and complex information flow processes; rapid patient turn-over; and PACU-specific documentation needs.¹

Objectives:
The objective of the data gap analysis was a comparison of current PACU paper documentation, ASPAN Perianesthesia Data Elements (PDE), and data elements in the current institutional Sunrise Eclipsys system. The goal was the creation of a proposal advocating for inclusion of PACU-specific data elements in the future Sunrise electronic nursing documentation system to meet evidence-based practice standards derived from ASPAN, to integrate with the institutional core elements in the institution-wide documentation system, and to support and advance perianesthesia nursing practice.

Process:
The analysis involved a review of ASPAN PDE with comparison to both institutional and current unit documentation standards. Consensus was obtained from perianesthesia nurses. The process included collaboration with the institutional Nursing Documentation Experts, Information Technology Experts, Nursing Educators, and the unit-based perianesthesia team. The perianesthesia documentation design was further discussed and developed by other perianesthesia settings within the institution, with the guidance of nursing experts.

Successful Practice:
The gap analysis process was successfully used to identify key PACU nursing documentation data elements for inclusion in the electronic system planned for implementation in November 2010.

Implications:
The use of evidenced-based perianesthesia nursing terminology and language contributed to the nursing compliance with PACU practice standards. The use of standardized perianesthesia nursing language will facilitate future projects to retrieve and exchange comparable nursing data for research, quality improvement initiatives, and evidence for perianesthesia nursing practice.²

References: