IMPLEMENTATION OF DELIRIUM MONITORING IN THE PACU

Team Leader: Elizabeth Card, RN, CPAN, CCRP
Vanderbilt University Medical Center, Nashville, TN
Team Members: Christina Tomes, RN; Jeannie Wood, BSN, RN; Cathy Lee, RN, CAPA, CPAN; Lisa Allen, RN; Lindsay Kellum, RN; Pratik Pandharipande, MD

Delirium is an acute brain organ dysfunction, associated with poor clinical and cognitive/functional outcomes. It is defined as a state of acute changes/fluxuations in a patient’s consciousness, accompanied by inattention, and disorganized thinking. Risk factors for delirium fall into two major categories: patient related factors (age, previous dementia, etc.) or iatrogenic risk factors (psychoactive medications, hypoxemia, etc.).

The CAM-ICU allows bedside nurses to detect delirium and has been used in several research studies to detect the prevalence of and risk factors for delirium in ICU. Prior studies report rates of delirium between 16-80%, however no data was collected in the PACU.

Objectives: Assess PACU nurses knowledge of delirium. To educate and increase staff’s awareness of complications, impacts of and treatments for delirium. To educate the PACU nurses on use of the CAM-ICU to detect delirium. To detect risk factors for and prevalence of delirium in the PACU.

Implementation: IRB approval was obtained. The CAM-ICU was adapted for the PACU. Bedside nurses sub-investigators were trained in research and CAM-ICU. Serving as experts during the training of staff in the PACU. Worksheets, training manuals, videos and in-services were used to train PACU staff.

Implications for peri-anesthesia nursing: We are pivotal in preventing, identifying and treating patients experiencing delirium. If we can take the lead in this, perhaps we are nipping the problem of delirium in the bud, not allowing it to have a prolonged course.