THE USE OF WARMED COTTON BLANKETS ON PATIENTS FOLLOWING SURGERY: A SAFE PRACTICE FOR PROMOTING PATIENT COMFORT

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Surgical patients often covered with warmed blankets for thermal comfort and to alleviate the discomfort of feeling cold in the perioperative environment. This study sought guide institutional blanket warming policies by producing evidence of blanket thermal behavior and patient blanket temperature preference. 156 adult participants were randomized to the intervention group (n=76) or control group (n=80). Intervention group participants received 155°F blankets and control group participants received 110°F blankets. Participants were covered with the blankets in the PACU and measurements were obtained for 10 minutes; an infrared thermometer was used to measure skin and blanket temperatures and a visual analog scale was used to measure thermal comfort. Blanket temperatures decreased so that mean temperatures were for both groups were less than 93°F two minutes after application. Intervention group showed higher skin temperatures and thermal comfort throughout 10 minutes of data collection. This study demonstrated that it is safe to cover surgical patients with blankets of temperature and that 155°F blankets are associated with higher skin temperature and thermal comfort levels.

Keywords: thermal comfort, blanket, PACU, temperature