IMPROVING PERIOPERATIVE OUTCOMES FOR THE ADULT PATIENT WITH OBSTRUCTIVE SLEEP APNEA AFTER GENERAL ANESTHESIA

Team Leader: Jill Setaro, RN, MSN, CPAN
Stony Brook Medicine, Stony Brook, NY
Team Members: Carole Capps, RN, BSN, CPAN; Edna Giffen, RN, MSN, CPAN;
Amy Ferrara, RN, BSN, CPAN; Michelle Knipe, RN; Henriette Lucas, RN, BSN;
Karen Wiederkehr, RN, BSN, CPAN

Abstract:
Care of the patient with Obstructive Sleep Apnea (OSA) has proved challenging in the postoperative setting. It has been observed that this patient population requires a high level of observation to maintain airway patency and oxygenation. Patients with OSA frequently present with an increased risk of difficult intubation and an increased sensitivity to sedative and analgesia medications. Postoperatively, patients with OSA are at risk for apnea, desaturation, and cardiac dysrhythmias.

The question of how to effectively manage the patient with obstructive sleep apnea after surgery emerged while caring for this population in the recovery period.

Literature review supported the need for improved, consistent care of the patient with sleep apnea. A failure mode effect analysis performed in the PACU demonstrated several high-risk modes that jeopardize the safety of patients with OSA. Utilizing the Chronic Care Model for improving patient outcomes, we examined the patient experience through the perioperative phase of the health care system. This resulted in the delivery system design of a nursing standard of care. Integrating clinical information systems to improve preoperative screening with the use of the STOP questionnaire will assist in identifying high-risk patients early in the surgical process. Intensive postoperative monitoring and discharge planning will provide the resources required for the patient to return safely to the community after surgery.

Implementing this standard has assisted in producing a proactive multidisciplinary team approach to the management of surgical patients with obstructive sleep apnea. This comprehensive plan results in safe, consistent care, educated patients and staff and improves patient outcomes after general anesthesia.

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