

THE EYES HAVE IT:
A “VISIONARY” NURSING PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT
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Background: Established methods to manage preoperative mydriasis for surgical ophthalmology patients is time consuming, labor intensive for nursing, and uncomfortable for patients. Alternative protocols that improve efficiency and patient comfort without compromising expected outcomes while allowing nursing more time at the bedside were needed. A review of the literature was conducted. This nurse driven initiative led to a collaborative effort of nursing and surgeons to identify and pilot an alternative method for preoperative pupil dilation.

Objectives: To investigate the efficacy of an alternative method for mydriasis comparing a five drop protocol to a two drop protocol with one drop instilled every two minutes versus the standard every five minutes.

Implementation: A pilot study was carried out by nursing comparing the five drop protocol to the two drop protocol. Sixty-three patients having cataract surgery were randomly chosen. Preoperative orders reflected which protocol was followed. Data was collected on the progression of pupil dilation at five minute intervals until 8mm was reached or thirty minutes after the first dilating drop. The protocols consisted of the same medications.

Outcomes: No significant difference in pupil response was seen. Pupils measured ≥ 6 mm, appropriate dilation for surgery. The change in practice was adopted for all patients requiring mydriasis. The process went from taking forty minutes to prepare a patient for surgery down to eight minutes.

Implications: Nursing: improved efficiency, minimized interruptions, enhanced productivity, decreased potential for infection, and medication errors, improved staff satisfaction.
Institution: on time OR starts, and potential for increasing surgical volume.