

USE OF EAR PLUGS AND EAR MUFFS TO REDUCE THE EFFECT OF NOISE IN THE POST ANESTHESIA CARE UNIT

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BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Excessive noise level adversely has affected the patient experiences at MD Anderson Cancer Center's Transitional Post Anesthesia Care Unit (TPACU). Data from Hospital Consumer Accredited Health Plan Survey (HCAHPS) revealed a negative trend in quietness of hospital environment in TPACU. For 3 months, 120 post-surgical patients in TPACU were surveyed about their perception on the effect of noise in recovery. Sources of noise identified were flow of traffic in the unit, noise from nurses' station, clinical alarms, call lights, phones and patient issues such as coughing, crying, moaning, and snoring.

OBJECTIVES OF PROJECT

The purpose of the Quality Improvement project was to improve patient satisfaction and their perceived experience in TPACU through noise reduction by using earplugs and ear muffs.

PROCESS OF IMPLEMENTATION

An extensive literature review was conducted to assess existing information on the effects of noise on post anaesthesia patients and the best practices for noise reduction in TPACU. A pilot study was done in TPACU after staff buy-in and education. All patients were offered ear plugs and ear muffs to reduce the effects of noise. Four nurses were trained as champions to monitor and support the staff. Post pilot evaluation of patient's perception on the benefits of ear plug/ear muff as well as perceived effect of noise on their post anaesthesia recovery was performed.

STATEMENT OF SUCCESSFUL PRACTICE

The HCAHPS score for quietness of hospital environment demonstrated an improvement of 20% from the pre pilot period. The post pilot survey indicated an improvement in patient's experience in TPACU. Patient's perception on adverse effects of noise in their recovery decreased from 79% to 30%. Out of 48 patients surveyed, 63% (30) patients perceived ear plugs and ear muffs benefited in reducing noise level in TPACU.

IMPLICATIONS FOR ADVANCING THE PRACTICE OF PERIANESTHESIA NURSING

This best practice can be generalized to other PACU settings where the patients are coherent to use this intervention. More research is warranted to reduce the effect of noise level in staff work performance in PACU settings.