

UTILIZATION OF ACUITY MEASUREMENT TOOL TO PREOPERATIVELY PREDICT PATIENT ACUITY IN THE AMBULATORY SURGICAL UNIT

Team Leaders: Marilyn Kopp, RN, Gina Jablenski, RN
Northwest Community Healthcare, Arlington Heights, Illinois

BACKGROUND INFORMATION RELATED TO PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION

We identified a need to create a tool as higher acuity has been noted with patients of complex health histories are more frequently being treated in the outpatient arena. By developing a patient acuity algorithm, we have been able to optimize staffing needs which may lead to better patient outcomes and patient satisfaction. Challenges have been predominately; patients as poor historians, language barriers, and the inability to reach the patient prior to the day of surgery. We have been able to determine and recognize staffing needs for higher acuity patients such as, blocks, isolation, pediatrics, etc.

OBJECTIVE OF PROJECT

The Acuity Algorithm is used to predetermine the appropriate staffing needs for future daily volume in the ambulatory surgery arena. Based on the rated Acuity level completed by the preoperative health history phone interview, staff plans and coordinates effective clinical pathways to meet or exceed safety standards for each individual patient.

PROCESS OF IMPLEMENTATION

Screening criteria was implemented through use of Acuity Algorithm during patient's preoperative health history phone interview. Staff was in-serviced to the proper use of the Algorithm for improved consistency of the different acuity levels. By following the algorithm, staff is able to predict acuity level, based on the patient's health history, educational needs, and fast track possibilities. Staffing needs and departmental hours may be adjusted appropriately to provide better patient safety and optimal post-surgical care.

STATEMENTS OF SUCCESSFUL PRACTICE

Pathways of the Acuity Algorithm helps to predict health complexity and acuity level each individual patient prior to their surgery. Staffing adjustments are performed to help meet the criteria for the heavily projected days.

IMPLICATIONS FOR ADVANCING THE PRACTICE OF PERIANESTHESIA NURSING

The use of Acuity Algorithm can provide a prediction of patient's complex health history, educational and safety needs. Staffing can be adjusted appropriately day(s) prior to surgery, to enrich patient satisfaction and optimize positive outcomes.