UNIVERSAL PROTOCOL AND TIME-OUT: A HIGHLY RELIABLE TOOL FOR THE PROMOTION OF PATIENT SAFETY

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Background Information: According to The Joint Commission, wrong patient, wrong site/side, wrong procedure/surgery has been the most reported sentinel event and found to be the third highest-ranking event. The Universal Protocol was designed to be used in all areas where invasive procedures are performed, including non-operating room settings. The Joint Commission includes the use of Time Out immediately prior to surgeries and "other invasive procedures that expose patients to harm" in its Universal Protocol

Objectives of Project:
1. Increase staff awareness and understanding of "Universal Protocol."
2. Reinforce every team member actively participates in the Time Out to ensure High Reliability

Process of Implementation: The perioperative nurses identified the need to increase staff awareness and adherence to follow the Universal Protocol and Time-Out policy before performing any invasive procedure. The perioperative nurses were given in-service on Universal Protocol and the importance of following the protocol before each invasive procedure. Scripted dialogue between the physician and nurses was developed to be used before starting any invasive procedure. The dialogue also involved patient's participation. The 10 components of the Universal Protocol were included in the scripted dialogue and encouraged active participation of each member of the team. During the Time-Out, members of the team (MD, RN, and patient) stop whatever they are doing and actively participate during the Time-Out. If there is any disagreement, the Time-Out is stopped and resumed as soon as the discrepancies are resolved. This practice resulted in effective communication among the surgeons, nurses, and patients thus ensure high reliability patient care. A poster was developed showing the 10 components of the Universal protocol.

Statement of Successful Practice: The implementation of Universal Protocol and Time Out before any invasive procedure or surgery, has improved patient safety and increased patient satisfaction. The scripted Universal Protocol has been fully integrated into practice.

Implications for Advancing the Practice of Perianesthesia Nursing: The scripted Universal Protocol helps ensure patient safety and satisfaction. The practice has been well received by perioperative team members and patients. The scripted Universal Protocol kept the healthcare provider engaged and empowered to speak anytime during the Time-Out.