

IMPROVING PATIENT SAFETY BY IDENTIFYING FALL RISKS

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Background Information: Fall prevention and fall related injuries are a prevalent patient safety concern. The Joint Commission has suggested actions to help prevent falls. There is a gap in using the established inpatient fall risk process at our institution, and trying to adapt it to the perioperative setting. This finding has lead us to create a way of identifying and communicating interdepartmentally patients that are at risk for falls in the perioperative setting.

Objectives of Project: Collaborate with Information System (IS) department to establish appropriate documentation and identify patients at risk; to better communicate among perioperative staff and hospital divisions; and standardize documentation and interventions provided for patient with fall risk.

Process of Implementation: Educators, Clinical Nurse Specialists (CNS)s, mangers of pre/post and surgical registration, IS, and professional practice specialist convened a task force to meet monthly. We decided a patient could be identified preoperatively by assessing for fall identifiers and interventions. Documentation, approval by administration, and standard work were established and confirmed. The fall identifiers and interventions were built into the electronic documentation to ensure if one fall identifier was selected the patient was tagged as a fall risk. Once they were determined a fall risk, the nurse had to specify which patient specific interventions were going to be implemented. On documentation an alert was placed on the screen in bright colors to notify staff of fall risk. The PACU's handoff document will have a checkbox at the top of the form to identify the patient's fall status for other staff that do not have access to the Electronic Patient Record. Surgical waiting staff will observe patients on arrival to the surgical registration/waiting, prior to escorting them to the preoperative holding area. All pre/post and surgical waiting personnel will receive initial education prior to launching of the program, then annual education on fall prevention.

Statement of Successful Practice: Staff has positive feedback regarding the ease of documentation and identification of fall risk patients. This also provides a safer environment to perioperative ambulatory patients.

Implications for Advancing the Practice of Perianesthesia Nursing: Making sure our field aligns with Joint Commission's standards and suggested actions to prevent and identify falls in perioperative patients.