

### Background

Surgical site infections (SSI) are the most common and costly hospital acquired infection. Decreasing the incidence of SSI is an ongoing goal of our surgical unit. Measures toward reaching this goal begin in preadmission testing and continue through post anesthesia care. One of the ways the perianesthesia nurse can help prevent this complication is to promote normothermia.

In pre-op, we have both BAIR paw gowns, and a supply of blankets kept in a stand-alone warmer. The OR manager presented to our Professional Nurse Council meeting literature from the National AORN conference on Best methods to promote normothermia. Studies show active warming to be most effective.

Nurses in pre-op were observed providing passive warming in lieu of active warming. A baseline audit of 185 cases confirmed with what little frequency active warming was used and a need for improved documentation.

### Objective

The objective of the project was to promote use and documentation of active warming in the pre-op setting.

Each nurse was made aware of the goal and the visual aids that would be placed in each bay.

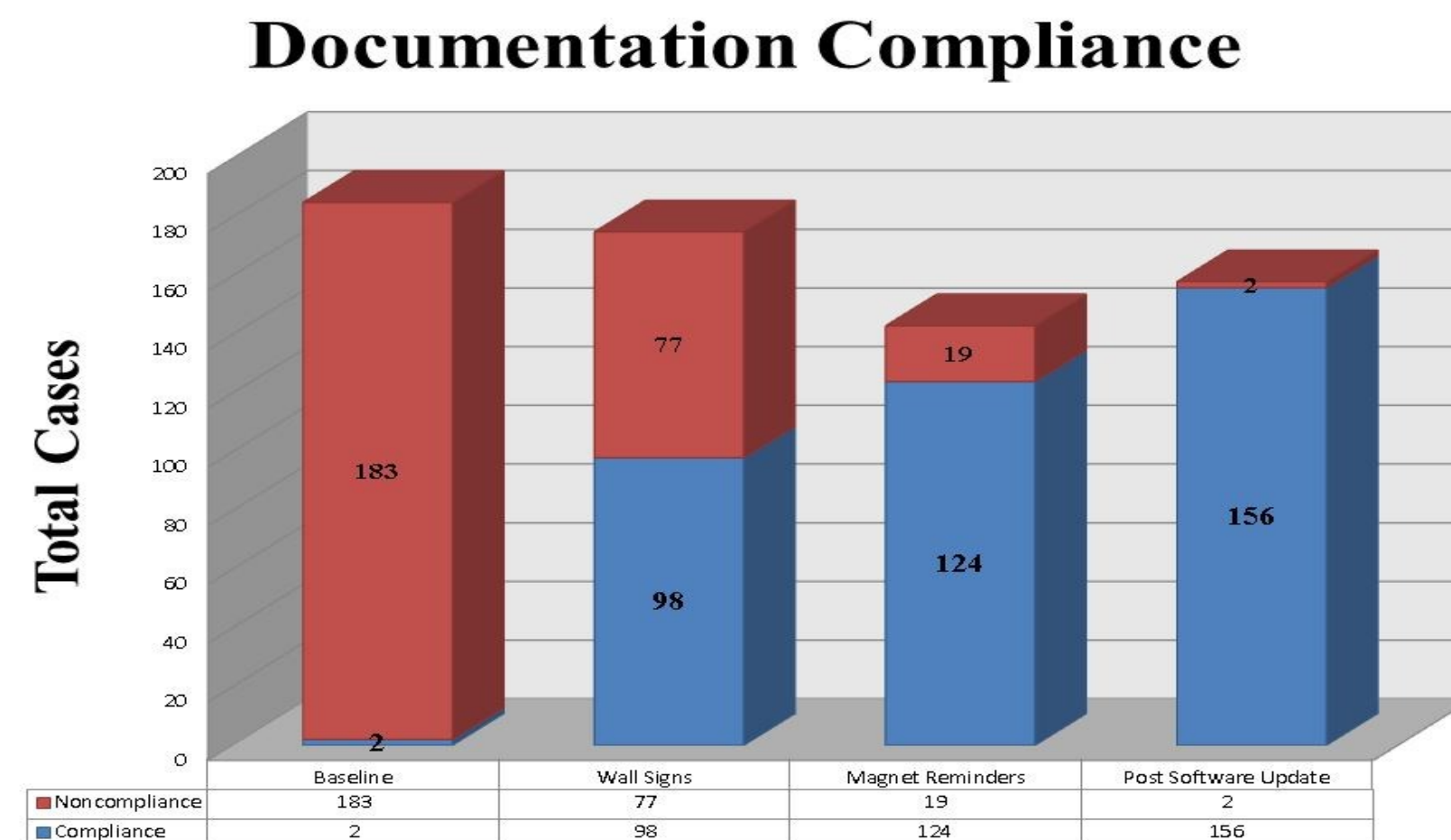
Patients were given warm blankets if, after being placed on the BAIR paw heat with instructions on the dial control, they reported any discomfort regarding the temperature; i.e. cold shoulders or cold feet.



### Implementation

- Following the initial audit, with approval from the department supervisor, wall sign reminders to use and document active warming were placed.
- After two weeks, 178 charts were reviewed.
- Magnets with a like reminder were placed by each keyboard for the following two weeks and 143 cases were audited.
- Four weeks later, a documentation software update included a drop down reminder for the nurses to apply active warming and 158 cases were then examined.

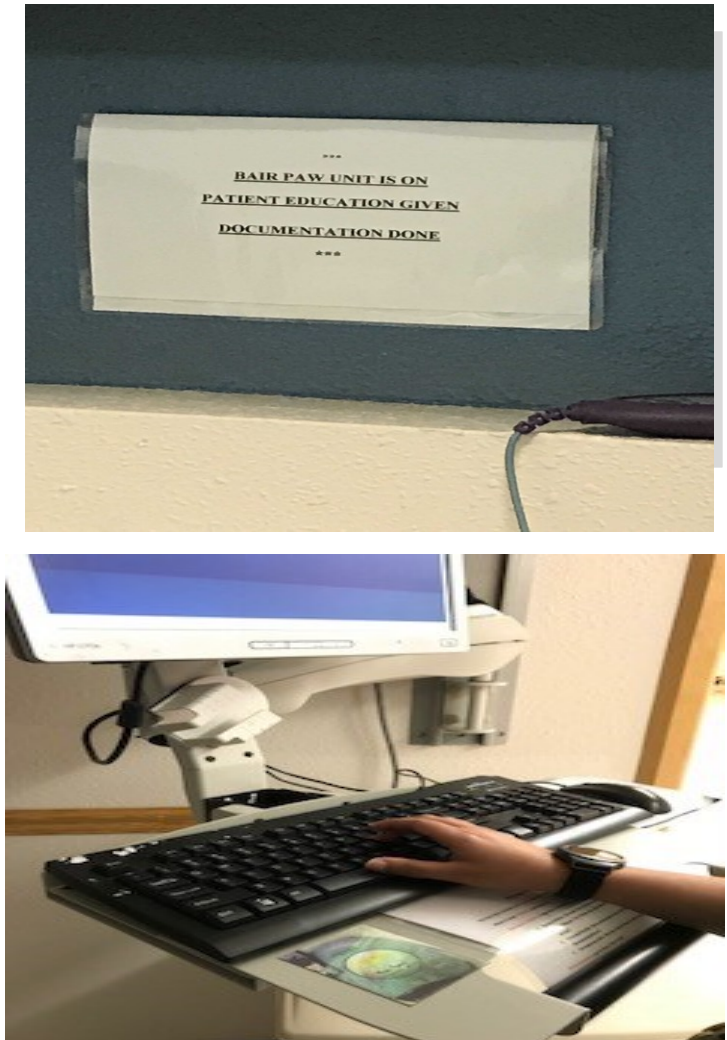
### Results



### Conclusion

With the improved visibility of each prompt, the audit reflected a significant improvement of nurses using and documenting active warming to improve normothermia.

Collaboration between Information Technology and Surgical Services promotes opportunities for nurses to utilize the most current practices as it relates to patient safety.



### References

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