



Administering Ketamine Infusions for Depression: Embracing Change in the Post Anesthesia Care Unit



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Background

- Ketamine infusions are emerging as a novel treatment therapy for patients with severe treatment resistant depression.
- Across the country, there are limited options for receiving ketamine infusions outside of an academic based medical research center.

Setting

- A 171-bed community teaching hospital in the northeast United States
- Staff wanted to provide ketamine to carefully evaluated patients with severe treatment resistant depression.
- Since ketamine is traditionally used as an anesthetic agent, it was determined that the Post Anesthesia Care Unit (PACU) would be the appropriate setting to provide this treatment.

Purpose

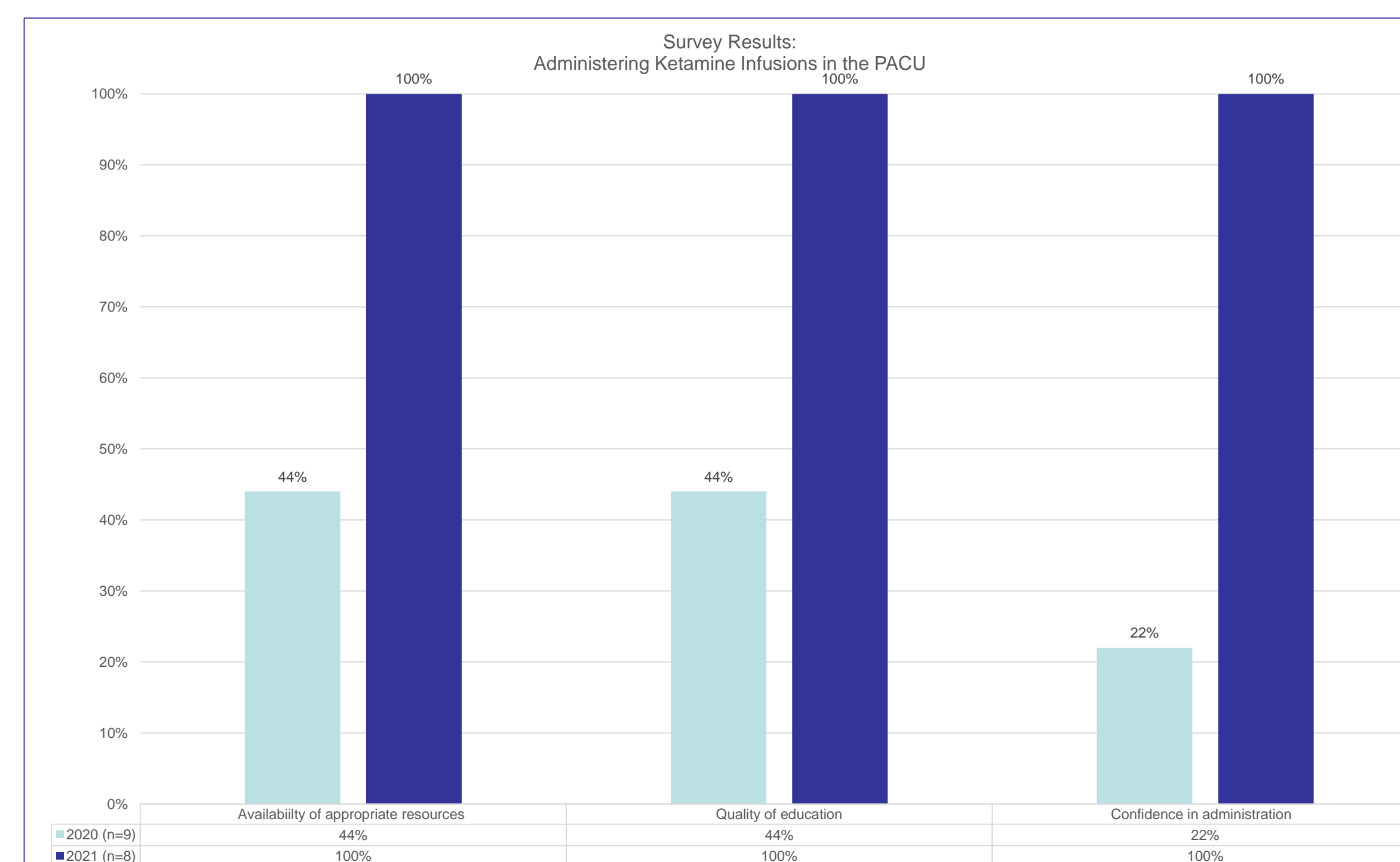
- To educate and engage post anesthesia care nurses to implement a non-traditional treatment procedure, Ketamine Infusions, in the PACU setting.

Process of Implementation

- Following the leadership decision to initiate ketamine infusions, a PACU nurse champion was identified. The champion was an integral member of the interdisciplinary task force charged with leading the change process.
- The nurse champion identified required process changes and collaborated with members of the interdisciplinary team to develop this novel care pathway.
- Additional PACU nurse champions identified specific practice changes required to successfully implement this new treatment including:
 - A dedicated ketamine infusion room with new equipment
 - Updates to the electronic health record
 - Collaborated on the development of a new Ketamine Infusion Procedure
 - Developed new standing orders to ensure timely availability of medications needed to treat adverse events
 - Established pre and post infusion huddles with the attending psychiatrist to debrief and identify critical process improvements for the future
- The nurse champions collaborated with the Behavioral Health and PACU Nursing Professional Development Managers to develop a comprehensive multi-modal education plan to ensure patient safety and PACU RN competency for this new practice.

Statement of Successful Practice

- Since May 2019, a total of 92 ketamine infusion treatments have been administered without serious adverse events.
- PACU nurses have embraced the practice change and identified opportunities for improvements as demonstrated through survey results.



Implications for Advancing the Practice of PeriAnesthesia Nursing

- The successful implementation of ketamine infusions is a result of PACU nurses being directly involved in the planning, implementation, and on-going evaluation of this initiative.
- As organizations across the country explore options to increase revenue sources that meet patient health care needs, PACU nurses will play an important role in addressing strategic initiatives by embracing novel treatment therapies.

Next steps

- Collaborate with attending psychiatrist to implement a *Depression Assessment* tool for use by PACU nurses prior to regularly scheduled Ketamine infusions.
- Increase the number of PACU nurses competent in Ketamine administration.
- Review of Ketamine Infusion procedure and processes to identify opportunities for improvement.

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