

Creating LVAD (Left Ventricular Assist Device) Knowledgeable Tool and Training for Unlicensed Assistive Personnel in the Perianesthesia Setting

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Background Information: LVAD (Left Ventricular Assist Device) is an electromechanical device which augments the cardiac circulation and output used as a bridge to replace a patient's failing heart function with end stage heart disease and/or failure awaiting either a heart transplant or destination therapy (determination of end of life care). The LVAD is surgically attached to the heart to help maintain left ventricle contractility. American Heart Association estimates 50,000 – 100,000 advanced heart failure patients that with an LVAD could experience an increased chance of survival with improved lifestyle quality. An increase of LVAD patients are needing surgical treatments; thereby seeing an increase number of patients in the perianesthesia area. While training has been established for registered nurses, no formal training has been implemented for unlicensed assistive perianesthesia nursing personnel.

Objectives of Project: Assess unlicensed perianesthesia nursing personnel with regards to LVAD knowledge. Determine knowledge deficits to educate and increase awareness of complications, nursing care, and reporting of pertinent facts to licensed staff.

Process of Implementation: Formulated questionnaire to determine knowledge base and implications of LVADs. PowerPoint presentation, training fact sheets, and in-services of unlicensed assistive perianesthesia personnel implemented. Follow up questionnaire to determine knowledge gained. Policy and procedure manual on unit. FAQ sheet done. Unlicensed nursing personnel algorithm posted at nursing desk.

Statement of Successful Practice: Post educational data results and observed changes in practice revealed an increased knowledge base and awareness by unlicensed assistive personnel of LVADs in identifying issues related to LVADs to report to perianesthesia registered nurses and to assist the RNs with care of LVAD patients and their families. Increased comfort level and competency in assisting LVAD patients noted.

Implications for Advancing the Practice of Perianesthesia Nursing: A future tool implemented for orientation and competency checklist for unlicensed assistive perianesthesia personnel.