

It's Complicated! Needlesticks in the Perioperative Area: How We Standardized the Process

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Background Information: Our needlestick process was confusing and outdated. Often when needlesticks occurred in the perioperative area, no one knew what forms to fill out, who to notify and what labs needed to be drawn. A simpler standardized process was needed to disseminate within our department.

Objectives of Project: Standardize the needlestick process to reduce miscommunication and confusion among the perioperative nurses.

Process of Implementation: The operating room (OR) and post anesthesia care unit (PACU) educators met with perioperative leadership, the nurse practitioner from employee health services (EHS) and a charge nurse from PACU to discuss a plan for standardizing the process. It was decided to develop a needlestick kit that had everything the nurse would need if an event happened. The outdated binder with multiple confusing steps was replaced with a one-page infographic to list step by step the process when a needlestick occurs. A Microsoft Teams in-service and multiple unit in-services were held prior to the roll out. An email was sent to all the perioperative staff attaching the infographic and informing them of the new process. The infographic was placed in each needlestick kit and delivered to each OR and PACU.

Statement of Successful Practice: After implementation of the needlestick kits and infographic, it has been noted that there has been less confusion among the staff and more collaboration between OR and PACU. We have seen less emails and phone calls on what to do in an event of a needlestick. EHS has noted there has been a decrease in missing documents since the implementation.

Implications for Advancing the Practice of Perianesthesia Nursing: By collaborating with OR and EHS and developing this needlestick kit and infographic, it has resulted in a more effective process with a positive impact within the department. The next step would be to have the paperwork digitized.