Opioid Administration Post-operatively: Reviewing the process and identifying standards and expectations for safe, effective care

**Purpose:** Patients recovering from surgery frequently require opioids for pain. After an incident where a patient required opioids and later narcan to reverse effects, we wanted to look at “standards, expectations, and post-operative order limits to identify improvement opportunities. Retrospective chart review of all patients requiring narcan was performed. Staff were surveyed on their perceptions regarding administration of opioids postoperatively to look for educational opportunities.

**Description:** Based on pharmacy audit of previous months usage of narcan, we performed case reviews on each patient. Data collected included: OSA risk, age, length and type of surgery, opioids given in the operating room and recovery room, time narcan administered, vital signs and pain scores at time of opioid administration. Data was reviewed for trends. Discussion centered around medications ordered, standard doses on order sheets, nurses assessment of patients requiring narcan.

**Evaluation:** Standards were revised to state patients would stay in division for monitoring an additional half hour after IV opioids. This offered time to assess for “stacking effect” of multiple doses of opioids. Education sessions were developed to update staff on new standards, review medications peaks and stacking effects of multiple doses, and to define appropriate assessment regarding administration.