Literature shows that thirst is often among the top complaints of ICU patients.

Comparative discomfort research in the PACU is very limited.

What is the prevalence and intensity of thirst compared to pain and nausea in the PACU among patients who received general anesthesia?

The mean rating for thirst was 4.34, compared with 3.3 (p=0.027 for pain, and 0.54 (p=0.001) for nausea.

The median was 5, compared with 2 for pain and 0 for nausea.

50 patients indicated thirst as their highest rated source of discomfort, compared with 37 for pain and 2 for nausea.

Thirst is a major source of discomfort for a large percentage of PACU Patients.

Thirst should be actively evaluated and treated (early mouth swabs, ice chips, etc.).

More research is needed on how to best address thirst in NPO Patients.

