

ARE YOU SMARTER THAN YOUR SMART PUMP?

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This educational project was designed to provide an underpinning for safe administration of high-alert medication infusions. The target audience was Phase I PACU nurses who were new graduates, or new to the specialty.

The Phase I PACU was staffed with about 50% experienced nurses, and 50% of nurses who were at the novice or beginner stage of skill acquisition. Phase I PACU nurses must be able to initiate vasoactive medications safely, and according to policy or protocol.

The project activity lasted one hour, and was designed to incorporate different methods of learning, including lecture, hands-on demonstration, game-playing, and simulation. After a quick review of objectives, terminology, and research on smart-pump technology, the nurses played a game, *Family Feud*. The nurses identified the top ten evidence based strategies to safely administer high-alert medicines. Their responses were compared to the research findings.

The next task was to locate the sepsis protocol on the hospital computer intranet. The final task involved critical thinking through simulation of a patient who went into septic shock. Nurses were directly observed for performance in recognition of changes in vital signs, assessment of the situation, and interventions, including correctly programming the smart pump, and getting and independent double-check. The experience was evaluated using the debriefing model. The nurses reported that they felt more comfortable about starting vasoactive infusions after participating in this activity.