

H.U.S.H. INITIATIVE, A NOISE REDUCTION PROJECT

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Background:

A quiet non-stimulating atmosphere is the preferred setting for patients in the PACU. Instead, patients often wake up to various unwanted sounds in the environment. Studies show that high levels of noise have negative physical and psychological effects on patients, including: sleep disruption, increased stress, and decreased patient confidence in the competence of their caregivers (Miller, 2006). Noise negatively affects staff performance due to interruption and distraction.

Objectives:

The goal of this quality improvement project is to determine whether implementation of noise reduction strategies will decrease sound levels in the PACU and result in improved patient and nurse satisfaction.

Process:

- 1) Surveys on patient and nursing staff perception of the noise in the PACU
- 2) Measurement of environmental sound
- 3) Implementation of Noise Reduction Strategies
 - noise monitoring device
 - noise canceling devices
 - signage
 - staff education

Results and Outcomes:

Patients (65%) overwhelmingly reported that a quiet environment is important to them while majority of nurses (67%) stated that noise levels affected their delivery of care. Patient perception of noise in the environment decrease from 4.16 to 2.9 in a scale of 1 to 5 after implementation of HUSH Initiative. Post implementation surveys showed increased patient and staff satisfaction.

Implications for Practice:

Visual cues, noise canceling devices and staff education are effective in reducing noise levels in the PACU. Decreased noise levels will improve patients' recovery experience and satisfaction with their surgical experience. Reduced noise levels increase nursing satisfaction by limiting distraction providing a less stressful work environment.