KNOW THE FLOW:
AN ALGORITHM FOR POST OPERATIVE URINARY RETENTION

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Patients who receive anesthesia are at increased risk for developing post-operative urinary retention (POUR). These patients are at risk for bladder overdistention, urinary tract infections, and catheter related complications. A group of staff nurses met to focus on POUR as a quality improvement project because there is a large population receiving spinal anesthesia at our institution.

The objective was to develop a POUR algorithm to identify high risk patients and intervene with bladder scanning or catheter placement as necessary.

The group performed a literature search about POUR and decided to initially focus on patients who would be admitted to hospital. They developed a data collection sheet that tracked how much was voided, if the patient was bladder scanned including the amount, and the results after bladder scanning. The PACU staff was educated by the group and they have collaborated with the pre-op nurses and health unit coordinators as they also played a vital part in tracking this data. They also collaborated with the floor nurses to provide education about the quality improvement project.

The group has continued to track data in relation to POUR. From there, they are working developing an algorithm to identify patients who are at high risk in developing POUR.

Overall the development of an algorithm will help standardize nursing practice and interventions as well as empower the staff nurses to identify patients at high risk. It should also increase collaboration between the units.