

FOCUSING ON PAIN: ENGAGING THE TEAM IN DOCUMENTATION CAN IMPACT OUTCOMES

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Background Information: Documentation around pain and sedation is an important aspect of care in the PACU and Phase II. In nursing we know that if “it’s not documented it’s not done”. The implementation of Electronic Health Record Systems (EHR) has helped in some areas such as date/time stamp, legibility, but inconsistencies remain in pain documentation (Samuels and Kritter, 2011). A focus on pain management in the perianesthesia area was undertaken as a project for a hospital professional nurse advancement program to improve documentation, update staff around current policy, and examine patient satisfaction.

Objectives of Project: To improve documentation of pain assessment, reassessment and the pain goal consistent with an updated policy. Educate staff and patients/families around the pain goal and increase number of patients meeting the pain goal at discharge to the floor. Improve understanding and documentation of sedation side effects of analgesia.

Process of Implementation: Data was collected via audits prior to implementation and throughout the project. Staff were updated monthly on unit’s success and opportunities for improvement. Education and updated policy information was conducted through email, staff meetings, and nurse reviews. Unit involvement was also supported by management with unit goals focused around the Press Ganey question “degree pain was controlled” in the perioperative setting and staff performed self-audits for their yearly nurse reviews.

Statement of Successful Practice: Improvements in areas of documentation and meeting the pain goal were noted after implementation of interventions, but varied throughout the project. An increase in Press Ganey scores were also noted but varied. It is difficult to determine if improved document relates to an increase in patient satisfaction and may likely be a result of the overall unit focus and project on pain management.

Implications for Advancing the Practice of Perianesthesia Nursing: EHRs will continue to provide opportunities for nurses to document pain management in the perianesthesia area. The various methods deployed in the project may be helpful for other organizations looking to improve pain and sedation documentation, along with Press Ganey.