

IMPROVING PATIENT OUTCOMES WITH CAPNOGRAPHY MONITORING IN THE PACU

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Background Information: Capnography monitoring provides an early warning of respiratory compromise. Early intervention can save money, time, and lives. The PACU at St. Joseph Hospital had the supplies and capability of capnography monitoring; however, nurses were not following credible evidence-based practice guidelines around capnography monitoring. Nurses having access to capnography monitoring and not using this equipment, is problematic. Furthermore, these nurses had a knowledge deficit regarding capnography as no protocol, policy, or educational competency existed for the department.

Objectives of Project: The purpose of this project is to enhance quality care by utilizing credible evidence-based practice guidelines surrounding capnography monitoring. Research has shown that capnography monitoring can save lives. This project will eliminate the knowledge deficit and educate nurses on the importance of capnography monitoring in the PACU.

Process of Implementation: The solution to the problem of insufficient utilization of capnography monitoring had three phases. First, a protocol for capnography monitoring based on best-practices identified in the literature was created. Second, a self-learning module on capnography monitoring was developed with a post-test to evaluate learning. Third, a skills competency checklist for capnography monitoring was also generated. The self-learning module, post-test, and skills competency were mandatory for nurses in the PACU. The module and competency was added to the annual educational requirements for the department.

Statement of Successful Practice: Education on capnography monitoring coupled with established guidelines increases standardization of practice. Capnography monitoring in the PACU has improved patient outcomes.

Implications for Advancing the Practice of Perianesthesia Nursing: The implementation of capnography monitoring in the PACU has and will continue to improve the safety of patients in the PACU. This project eliminated the knowledge deficit and educated nurses on the importance of capnography monitoring. Lastly, the developed protocol for capnography monitoring assisted in standardizing practice within the PACU.