

## **KNOWLEDGE IS POWER: IMPROVING PATIENT EDUCATION ABOUT NEW MEDICATION AND SIDE EFFECTS PRIOR TO DISCHARGE**

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**Background Information:** The patient transition from hospital to home can pose a challenge to patients and caregivers in relation to multi medication schedules. The health literacy of patients can limit the understanding of medication instructions. A quality improvement project was implemented to improve our Transition Post Anesthesia Care Unit (TPACU) monthly Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and System (HCAHPS) scores related to discharge information about new medication and side effects.

**Objectives of Project:** The objectives of this project were to improve patient knowledge and awareness of their current medications and potential side effects. The project was aimed to create a visual aid handout with detailed medication information that included a domain picture, type and name of medicine, how it is administered, common side effects, and special considerations. The items included in the handout were reviewed by our institution's patient education department prior to implementation. The project reinforced nursing education about new medication and side effects using additional patient and family teaching modalities prior to discharge.

**Process of Implementation:** There were eight categories of commonly used classes of new medications identified: antibiotics, pain, blood pressure/heart, blood thinners, lungs/ breathing, stomach /digestions, high blood sugar and constipation. The nursing staff was educated through several teaching methodologies including a Power Point presentation, one-to-one demonstration, and communication. Nursing staff were also taught the importance of using the teach-back method with patients and creating a shame free environment. The implementation of the Patient Education: New Medication and Side Effects Handout began in December 2015.

**Statement of Successful Practice:** A review HCAHPS quarterly scores from December 2014 to December 2015 showed the patient satisfaction domain of staff describing medication side effect was 62.5%. After implementing the visual handouts and staff education, the HCAHPS scores from December 2015-March 2016 increased from 62.5% to 100% patient satisfaction.

**Implications for Advancing the Practice of Nursing:** Patients receive many new medications upon discharge from surgical procedures. The concern becomes if he/she understands the reason for the medication and potential side effects. The feedback from patients can assist the nurses to develop and re-evaluate the effectiveness of teaching tools and modalities. The need to address the patient's understanding for new medication and its side effects can be applied to any setting.