

# OH BABY! THERE'S A PREGGER IN MY PACU

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## Background/Introduction

An increase in patient volume and acuity in Post-Anesthesia Care Unit (PACU)s includes an increase in the Obstetrical (OB) patient population requiring post-anesthesia care for non-OB procedures and interventions, as well as OB procedures requiring general anesthesia. Stakeholders noticed that providing care for OB patients in a non-OB PACU led to some distinct challenges/opportunities related to the needs that are unique to the OB population. OB patients at this institution are defined as patients with confirmed gravidity regardless of gestation through six weeks postpartum.

## Purpose

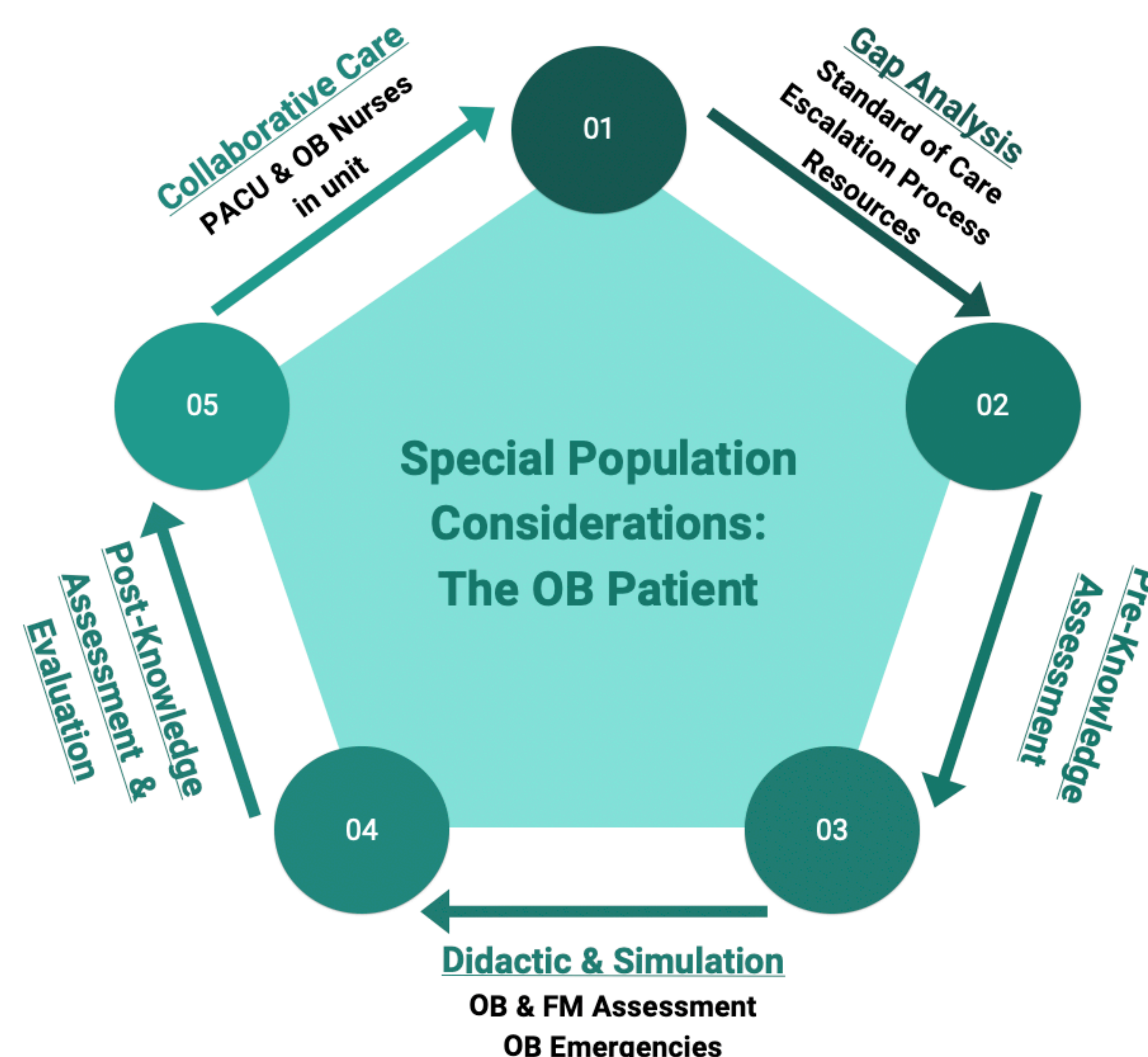
Care for OB patients is not limited to the Labor and Delivery Unit. According to various professional organizations, OB patients should receive the same level/ standard of care regardless of the location where care is provided<sup>1-4,6-7</sup>. Hence, the purpose of the program was to increase the knowledge related to the special considerations and care of the OB patient in the PACU.

## Methods

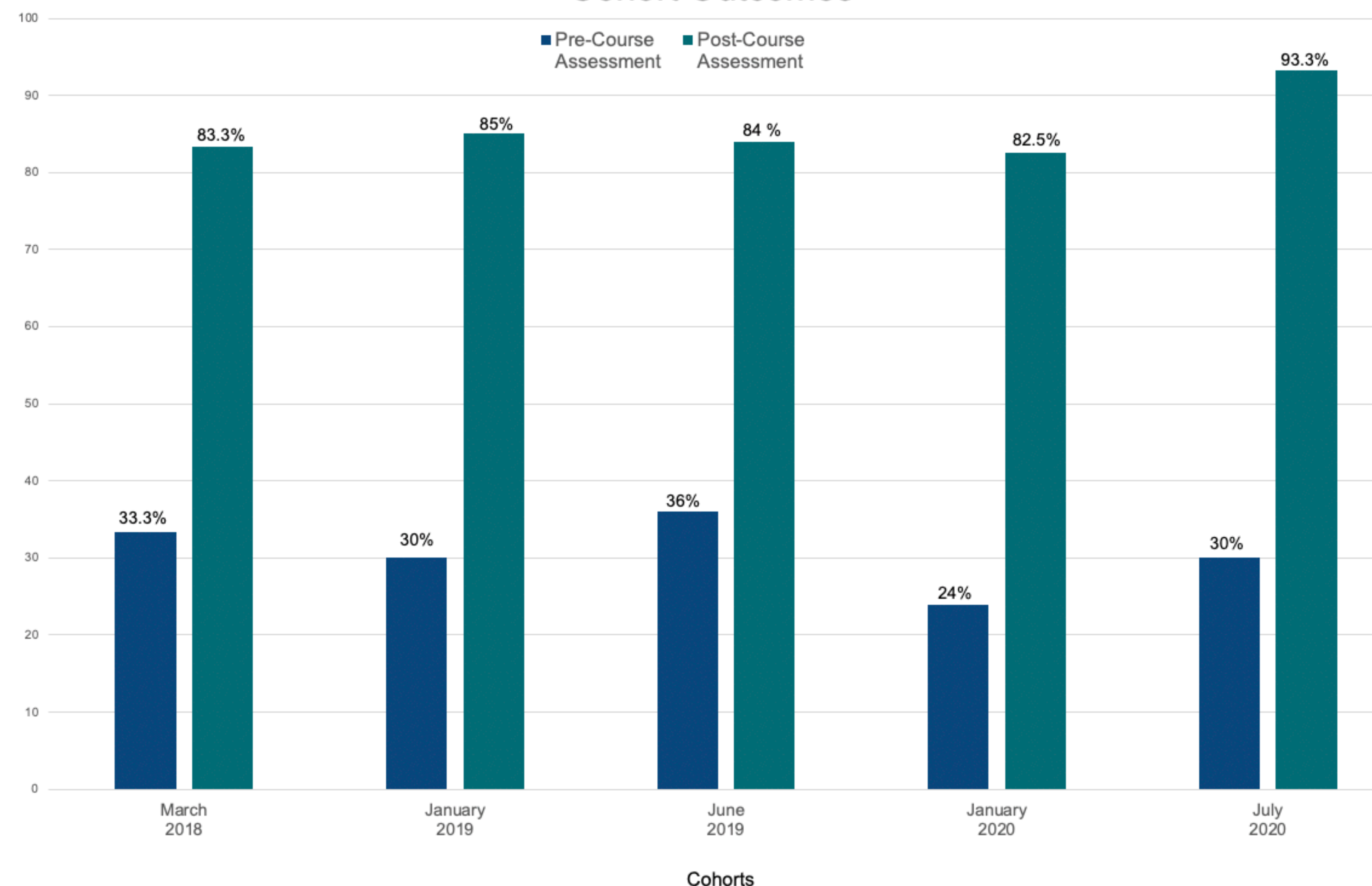
Collaborative gap analyses by the PACU and OB educators revealed that fundamental knowledge, skills, and adherences to professional organization recommendations regarding standards of care for OB patients in a non-OB specific PACU were opportunities for improvement. New curriculum was added to the PACU Residency/ Transition to Practice and PACU Preceptor curriculums which offer didactic and simulation activities to streamline and disseminate information. "Special Population Considerations: The OB Patient" discusses the fundamentals of OB assessment, fetal monitoring (FM) expectations, postpartum hemorrhage care, hospital policies and procedures specific to these patients, and OB emergencies and equipment which were guided by professional practice guidelines<sup>1-4</sup>. Further, OB physician consult with surgical privileges was re-emphasized as a requirement for all OB patients in non-OB PACUs as another element of patient safety; this consult includes 24/7 OB hospitalist availability and OB nursing care<sup>5-6</sup>.

A knowledge assessment was performed pre and post course offerings to measure changes in knowledge. Simulation added another layer of knowledge reinforcement, applying new knowledge into tactile performance. Additionally, program evaluations were provided post course offerings for feedback to improve and tailor course evolution. After the first cohort, feedback revealed a need for a more collaborative model of care for OB patients, where both the PACUs and the OB department committed to partnering via additional staff to deliver individualized care depending on the specific needs of the patient.

## Results



## Cohort Outcomes



## Outcome

To date, five cohorts have completed the "Special Population Considerations: The OB Patient" course. A common theme during the gap analysis was anxiety and uncertainty related to processes and standards of care when providing care for OB patients in the PACU. The initial knowledge assessment confirmed gap analysis findings. Initial knowledge assessment findings revealed an average score 30.6 % pre-course assessment. Post-course assessment scores which were measured after didactic and simulation averaged 85.6% for an improvement of 55%. Program evaluations noted that 100% of participants found education regarding care of the OB patient beneficial and that knowledge they received would be implemented in their practice when providing care to OB patients.

## Discussion

The volume of OB patients in the PACU is increasing; however, this population is still considered high risk-low frequency. Collaborative care is the key in this population with experts in PACU procedural recovery and experts in maternal expertise such as fetal monitoring to ensure that patient safety and positive patient outcomes are a priority<sup>3,7-8</sup>. Since the offering of this course, communication between all PACUs and the OB department has improved, the escalation process, and questions regarding the standards of care for these patients has improved. Feedback from stakeholders such as physicians, hospital leadership, and nursing staff have had positive feedback regarding team collaboration.

## Implications for Future

In addition to the "Special Population Considerations: The OB Patient" curriculum being offered, OB learning enrichment opportunities should be added to unit in-services, collaborative skills and drills, and/ or unit-based competencies to ensure that PACU nurses are retaining knowledge regarding the care of the OB patient in the PACU.

## References

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