Improving PACU-Pharmacy Workflow
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Background Information: The Post Anesthesia Care Unit (PACU) utilizes an anonymous 'Suggestion Box' as a platform to address unit concerns, frustrations and opportunities for improvement. The suggestions are reviewed and shared with the Unit Council monthly. We noticed reoccurring submissions relating to issues regarding medication verification delays, inadequate communication from the Pharmacy, and medications not being stocked in the Omnicell (automated dispensing cabinet) for patients who stayed overnight in the PACU.

Objectives of Project: Optimizing PACU-Pharmacy workflow through collaborative efforts, streamlining processes to reduce patient care delays, and improve staff satisfaction.

Process of Implementation: Upon reviewing workflow suggestions with the Unit Council, a compilation of various issues and suggestions were discussed. Subsequently, a pre-intervention survey was distributed to the nurses to gauge overall satisfaction with the PACU-Pharmacy workflow. Using these survey results, we engaged with our peri-operative pharmacy leadership to arrange a morning huddle, during which we shared insights into our challenges and explored alternative workflow practices. Staff in-services were conducted to familiarize both Pharmacy and PACU staff with the newly developed processes. To gauge progress and improvements, we administered a follow-up survey after the implementation of these new procedures.

Statement of Successful Practice: We demonstrated improvement across all aspects posed in our pre- and post-intervention surveys. Our surveys presented three key questions: (i) How satisfied are you with the current workflow with the pharmacy? (ii) How satisfied are you with the current overnighter medications being stocked? (iii) How satisfied are you with the medications getting verified in a timely manner?

We maintain an ongoing assessment and communication with the staff to identify ways to improve the workflow and engage with pharmacy to discuss any barriers. Further surveys are planned to ensure the continued refinement of this workflow, with the aim of reducing barriers in nursing care.

Implications for Advancing the Practice of Peri-anesthesia Nursing: Nurses have developed effective workarounds to provide care despite a challenging environment. However, these workarounds do not eliminate the daily frustrations nurses encounter. To ensure the delivery of high-quality and timely care, it's crucial to identify ineffective workflows that cause delays and create challenges for nurses. Collaboration and the development of streamlined processes are essential for optimizing care delivery, workflow efficiency, and long-term success.