

Preparedness in Perioperative Departments: Strategies for Effective Disaster Response

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Abstract Background Information: The perioperative department is a critical component of the hospital, serving as the hub for surgical procedures and patient care that directly impacts multiple areas of the hospital. However, during disaster events, this department can often be overlooked when determining patient flow and processes. By employing a systems-level approach, we developed job action sheets that clearly outline the perioperative departments' roles and responsibilities in disaster scenarios, ensuring effective coordination and communication across all departments. This proactive planning helps mitigate risks and enhances overall hospital resilience during emergencies.

Objectives of Project: The project aims to outline the roles and responsibilities for all staff by interlinking a series of job action sheets to streamline the communication process throughout the perioperative departments ensuring successful treatment and transition of patients in a disaster event. Empowering staff at all levels with specific job functions allows for increased collaboration and gives direction during highly stressful situations.

Process of Implementation: The process for implementation included all perioperative departments creating job action sheets, which are broken down into four sections: assess, prepare, respond, and maintain. Each section then has designated tasks. All perioperative leaders met to collaborate and discuss the implications of a disaster and how this affects each unit, as well as the trickle-down effect that occurs between departments. A job action sheet was also created for the manager on-call in order to provide clear direction for their role during a disaster. A disaster drill was held, and the job action sheets were implemented. After the exercise event, a debrief meeting was held to discuss suggested changes to these sheets to better match workflows.

Statement of Successful Practice: This new structure can be implemented in situations of mass casualty, evacuation, or internal systems malfunctions. The next steps are to revise the departments' job action sheets with the recommended changes, create a living worksheet to enter available space, staff, and resources in real time, and expand this process into other procedural areas in the hospital.

Implications for Advancing the Practice of Perianesthesia Nursing: Providing perioperative staff and leaders with a job action sheet will provide direction, clarity, collaboration, improve patient flow, expedite patients to the OR, and ensure patient safety during a disaster event.