

## **Stop the Confusion: Developing a Delirium Clinical Care Pathway to Improve Patient Outcomes and Safety**

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**Abstract Background Information:** Delirium is preventable but associated with poor outcomes and prolonged stays. A standardized pathway can enhance early recognition, prevention, and management. The Perioperative Clinical Practice Council (PCPC) noted the need to improve post-operative delirium management. For care continuity, implementation deferred until the house- wide Delirium Task Force developed a Clinical Care Pathway.

**Objectives of Project:** To implement a perianesthesia delirium Clinical Care Pathway in collaboration with house-wide endeavors.

**Process of Implementation:** PCPC joined a multidisciplinary team developing a care pathway. Key components included:

- Risk assessment: Implementing validated tools to identify patients at high risk: AWOL for risk screening; Nursing Delirium Assessment Screen (NuDeSc) and Confusion Assessment Method for the ICU (CAM-ICU) for actual occurrence assessment
- Early detection: Adult patient screening for risk at first point of contact: Pre anesthesia testing, and pre-operative. High risk patients are evaluated in PACU and Phase 2 through NuDeSc.
- Prevention strategies: Implementing interventions to reduce delirium risk factors, such as hydration, sleep, and medication management. A sunrise / sunset protocol and a quiet menu of non-pharmacologic nursing interventions was embedded. Education was done from August to September 2023 for all staff. A community page is a repository of resources for Delirium Care. Patient education brochures, care notes and the organization's website content were developed to facilitate patient and family education.
- Management: Providing guidelines for the treatment of delirium, including environmental modifications, pharmacotherapy, and supportive care. Delirium order sets were developed for the medical management of active delirium.
- Monitoring and evaluation: Continuously monitoring the effectiveness of the pathway and making adjustments. Collaboration with informatics and the Quality Department is being done to evaluate compliance and clinical outcomes.

**Statement of Successful Practice:** The delirium pathway resulted in a standardized approach to delirium prevention, diagnosis, and management which can improve patient outcomes by reducing delirium incidence , shortening stays, and improving functional recovery. It can enhance communication among healthcare providers and ensure consistent care.

**Implications for Advancing the Practice of Perianesthesia Nursing:** Implementing a delirium clinical care pathway is essential for improving patient outcomes and safety. By providing a structured approach to the prevention, diagnosis, and management of delirium, healthcare organizations can enhance the quality of care for patients at risk.