



Pennsy CUS+E: Improving Safety Through Effective Communication

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Background & Introduction

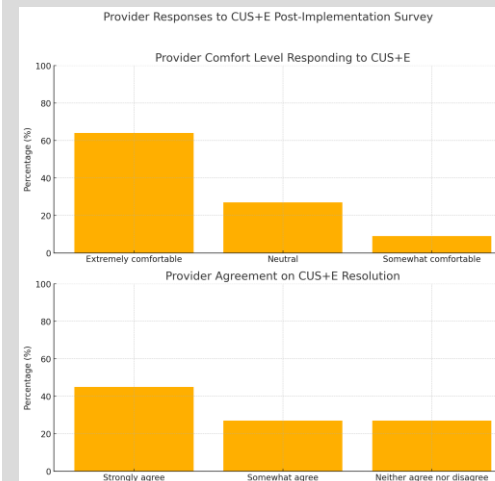
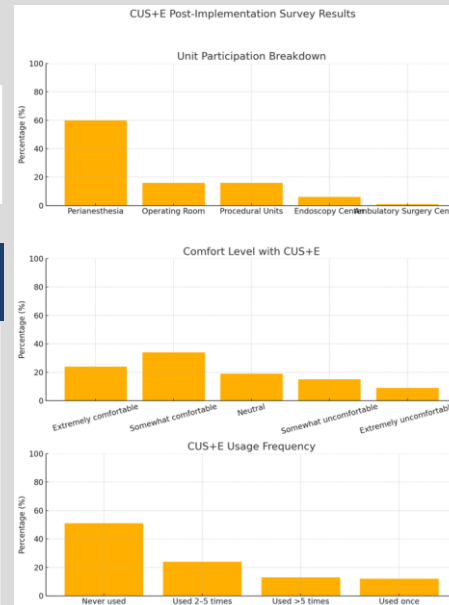
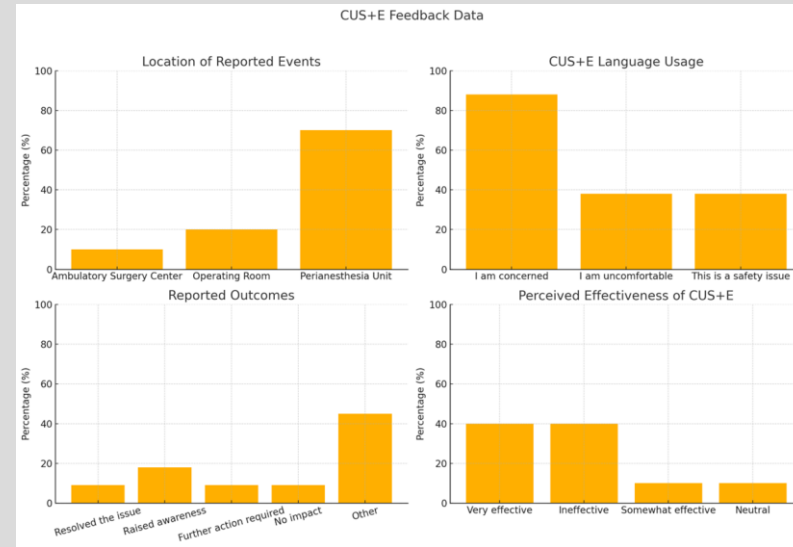
- The Department of Perioperative Services at an urban academic hospital faces persistent communication challenges tied to its cultural dynamics.
- A culture of safety survey conducted across all roles within perioperative services highlighted a notable discrepancy- while team members generally felt comfortable raising safety concerns, nurses and ancillary support staff highlighted a significant issue with disrespectful behavior, a perception not shared by surgeon providers.
- These challenges contribute to safety events and professional conduct issues reported through the hospital's safety reporting system.
- The lack of effective communication creates an environment where team members feel unsupported or discouraged from voicing critical safety concerns in real time. This hesitancy affects not only team members' confidence but also the overall safety and quality of patient care, posing significant risks to staff morale and clinical outcomes.

Objectives

- The project aimed to enhance communication across all disciplines by implementing the CUS+E tool through extensive education, ultimately reducing adverse events, increasing reporting, and boosting team members' comfort in using CUS+E.

Process of Implementation

- A robust education effort for CUS+E was completed with all disciplines within perioperative services through in-person training sessions and reinforcement in staff meetings, huddles, and provider meetings.
- Structured language was developed to navigate conversations for both—where CUS+E was used to raise a concern and how to respond.
- Once implemented, team members submitted feedback to provide examples of when CUS+E was used or attempted to be used.
- Adjustments were made as needed based on team member feedback.
- A post-implementation survey was conducted for staff and providers.



Statement of Successful Practice

- The majority of staff felt either somewhat comfortable or extremely comfortable using the CUS+E tool.
- Majority of providers felt comfortable when staff used CUS to raise safety concerns, generally responded with explanations, and identified challenges related to CUS+E use.
- The number of safety reports submitted through the organization's reporting system remained unchanged, with no notable increase or decrease.
- Since the implementation, there have been no sentinel events, such as wrong-side surgery or retained foreign objects, within Perioperative Services.

Implications for Advancing the Practice of Perianesthesia Nursing

- Nurses consistently recognize risks and act, even in high-pressure environments, reinforcing the need to support and empower them in this role.
- Creating a just culture where nurses feel safe to voice concerns without negative consequences is essential for patient safety and team morale.
- Nursing practice must be supported through education, psychological safety, and strong leadership engagement to fully leverage the CUS+E model and advance a culture of safety.