

Access to Implanted Ports in Perioperative Settings

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Abstract Background Information: In the Post Anesthesia Care Unit (PACU), nurses care for patients with diverse medical needs, including those with implanted ports. These devices are used for chemotherapy, multi-drug infusions, blood transfusions, total parenteral nutrition (TPN), and frequent blood draws. To ensure patient safety and prevent complications such as infection, it is essential that nurses are educated on the proper management of implanted ports. However, due to the infrequent nature of these patients in PACU, there is a gap in nurses' knowledge and comfort in managing these devices.

Objectives of Project: This PACU RN led project aimed to address the knowledge gap regarding the care of implanted ports in PACU nurses. Specifically, the project sought to determine how targeted education and return demonstration using low-fidelity simulation could improve PACU nurses' comfort levels in accessing, de-accessing, and troubleshooting implanted ports.

Process of Implementation: The intervention began by appraising evidence-based literature on the proper care and troubleshooting of implanted ports. This information was compiled into a presentation delivered to PACU nurses. Prior to the session, staff completed a pre-survey to assess their baseline knowledge and comfort level with the subject. During the education session, nurses received a didactic presentation and participated with a hands-on practice for accessing and de-accessing ports. A post-session survey was administered to evaluate changes in their knowledge and comfort levels.

Statement of Successful Practice: The results of the pre- and post-surveys demonstrated a significant increase in knowledge and confidence. The nurses reported a 47% increase in comfort with accessing and de-accessing implanted ports. Additionally, there was a 40% improvement in their ability to troubleshoot and maintain the devices in accordance with hospital policies and procedures.

Implications for Advancing the Practice of Perianesthesia Nursing: This project highlights the importance of ongoing evaluation of education needs in specialized nursing care, particularly in areas where exposure is infrequent. Regular re-education on implanted port care has been shown to help PACU nurses stay current with hospital protocols and may help to improve their ability to provide safe, high-quality care. Future evaluation could focus on the effectiveness of periodic training and long-term retention of knowledge and comfort among PACU nurses.