

Revision and Organization of a PACU Emergent Intubation Toolbox to Facilitate Improved Patient Outcomes

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Background Information: Patients arriving to the post-anesthesia care unit (PACU) have an inherent risk of possible re-intubation due to effects of general anesthesia and airway compromise. Our PACU experienced a situation in which a patient needed to be emergently re-intubated and supplies were not organized or accessible in a timely manner, causing stress among staff members and possible delay in patient care.

Objectives of Project: The objective of this project was to organize an intubation toolbox to have necessary supplies. Supplies needed to be in an organized, accessible, central location, eliminating the need to gather supplies from several locations in an emergent situation and compromising patient outcomes.

Process of Implementation: An interdisciplinary approach was taken regarding the contents of the toolbox. Input was sought from the anesthesia department regarding what supplies would be necessary for an emergent re-intubation in the PACU. Advice was also obtained from the emergency department (ED) who had existing rapid sequence intubation (RSI) toolboxes in their department. After gaining input from PACU nurses and completing research, permission was granted from PACU leadership to order two toolboxes, one for adults and one for pediatrics. Supplies were obtained and the toolboxes were stocked and labeled. In addition, a process for checking the contents of the boxes for outdates and restocking after use was developed.

Statement of Successful Practice: After implementation of our intervention, re-intubation of two PACU patients went smoothly and without hesitation due to necessary supplies being easily accessible and properly labeled. Both nursing and anesthesia gave positive feedback.

Implications for Advancing the Practice of Perianesthesia Nursing: Having intubation toolboxes facilitates ease of re-intubation in an emergent situation in the PACU. We would like to inspire other PACUs to implement our intubation box project to decrease anxiety among staff members and improve patient outcomes in emergency situations.