

Pediatric PACU Work Flow Improvement

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Background Information: Cleveland Clinic's pediatric PACU is a 10-bed unit that takes care of patients throughout all phases of surgery including pre-operative, Phase I and Phase II recovery. Daily census ranges from 20-25 patients. Patient acuity varies greatly from simple outpatient procedures to patients requiring intensive care unit.

Traditionally, pre-op patients were assigned to rooms 1-4 and post-op patients were assigned rooms 5-10. Staff assignments did not vary. Nurses assigned to rooms 5-10 were burdened with managing post-op patients with higher acuity compared to patients in pre-op. This led to frustration, division amongst the staff, and lack of team work.

Objectives of Project: The objective was to create better workflow in the unit, improve nurse job satisfaction, morale, and team work.

Process of Implementation: Nursing created a perception survey on staff assignments and team work. First, we trialed a 3 bed space with 2 nurses sharing the assignment. Second, we trialed redistribution of pre- and post-op patients throughout the entire unit and returned to the 1 RN to 2 bed assignment. Patients were assigned based on their arrival time while balancing pre- and post-op patients throughout the unit. Nurses were notified when they were next in line to receive a patient. Job satisfaction and team work were measured using a 5-point Likert scale. Staff were surveyed pre- and post-intervention.

Statement of Successful Practice: Pre-intervention measuring job satisfaction with assignments was low. Post-intervention #1 staff felt the workload improved but new issues were uncovered. Post-intervention #2 nurse satisfaction was at an all-time high. The nursing staff in the Pediatric PACU have successfully developed and implemented a new workflow process that has resulted in improved staff assignment and teamwork satisfaction.

Implications for Advancing the Practice of Perianesthesia Nursing: In reviewing the literature, we found that there is a need to balance nurse assignments and patient acuity. When patient acuity is not evenly distributed among staff it can lead to decreased quality of care, increased length of stay, and nurse burnout. Initially senior staff were resistant to change but were willing to try something new for the betterment of the unit. Successful practice requires that nurses remain flexible and adaptable to the ever changing needs of the unit.