

**Improving Care of Children and Young Adults after ACL Surgery:  
Implementation of Best Practice**

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**Background Information:** Opioid overprescribing after surgery and lack of knowledge about proper disposal of excess opioids may contribute to opioid misuse and overdose through medication availability. A recent study of adolescents and young adults (AYA) following anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) reconstruction (Taylor, Killilea, Dugan-Frost, & Solodiuk, 2017) reported that patients (N=100) used only 36% of prescribed oxycodone and 30 tablets of 5mg oxycodone would be adequate for most. Alarming, 65% of patients/families reported not knowing what to do with the remaining oxycodone tablets.

**Objectives of Project:**

**Objective #1:** To improve safety and the quality of pain management through quality improvement efforts to increase multimodal pain management and decrease opioid prescribing.

**Objective #2:** To improve discharge education regarding the use and proper disposal of opioids.

**Process of Implementation:** Study findings were presented to nursing and physician leadership then further disseminated to pertinent staff members. A Family Education Sheet: *Opioid Pain Management after Surgery* was developed on opioid use, safe disposal of prescription opioids, nonopioid analgesics, and alternative pain management techniques. Patients and families discharged with an opioid prescription are given this sheet with a PACU nurse verbally reviewing pertinent information. This is then documented in the electronic medical record (EMR).

**Statement of Successful Practice:**

**Objective #1:** The percentage of patients receiving > 50 tablets of 5mg oxycodone after discharge from ACL day surgery decreased from 62% in 2017 Q1 to 0% in 2017 Q4. The percentage of patients receiving 5mg > 30 tablets decreased from 100% in 2017 Q1 to 65% in 2017 Q4.

**Objective #2:** EMR audits revealed a greater than 90% compliance with PACU nurses educating patients documented use of the Family Education sheet.

**Implications for Advancing the Practice of Perianesthesia Nursing:** PACU nurses play a vital role in providing discharge education about pain management after surgery. Discharge education including written and verbal instructions on the safe use of opioids, alternative pain management medications and techniques and the proper disposal of unused prescription medications is vital to preventing opioid misuse and overdose in children and young adults.