

# KETAMINE INFUSION TREATMENT (KIT): EMERGING ROLE OF PACU RNs IN THE CARE OF VETERANS WITH TREATMENT-REFRACTORY DEPRESSION (TRD) AND SEVERE SUICIDAL IDEATION (SI)

**Team Lead: Gloria Abadilla, BSN, RN, CCRN-CMC**

**Team Members: Leah Fryml, MD, Staff Psychiatrist TRD Director, Sarah Babcock, MSN, RN, TRD Care Coordinator, Ester Smith, BSN, RN**

## Background

Depression remains one of leading mental health conditions in the military. TRD is associated with reduced quality of life, social and occupational impairment, and higher likelihood of prior suicide attempts; veterans are particularly vulnerable to multiple psychiatric disorders, making them more susceptible to TRD amplifying clinical and economic burdens and treatment represents significant challenge for physicians.

## Objectives of Project

To involve and educate PACU RNs in the implementation of non-traditional treatment procedure (ketamine infusion) in the PACU setting.

## Process of Implementation

Since 2019 DVAHCS has been involved in preliminary use of ketamine infusion treatment for TRD following established National Guidelines. Metrics gathered were utilized as criterion in the inception of local guidelines and development of Medical Center Policy (MCP).

## Process of Implementation, cont'd

The PACU RN involved during preliminary process helped identified necessary process changes and collaborated with interdisciplinary team members to develop MCP guidelines.

- a. Designated PACU bay area was selected where treatment can be done.
- b. Collaborated with IT team: update electronic health record documentation.
- c. Templated orders were created: minimize medication errors and facilitate its timely availability.
- d. Established time out verification process with attending psychiatrist prior to treatment & debriefing at completion seeking process improvement.

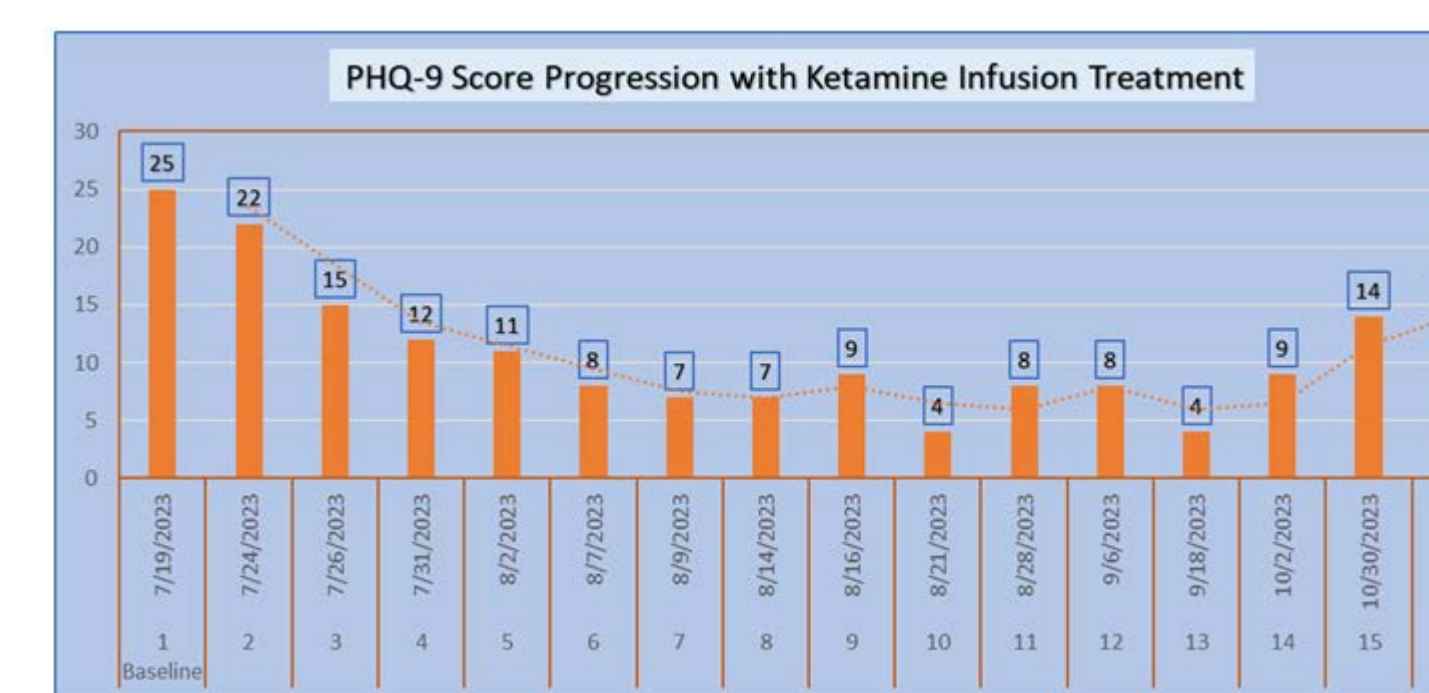
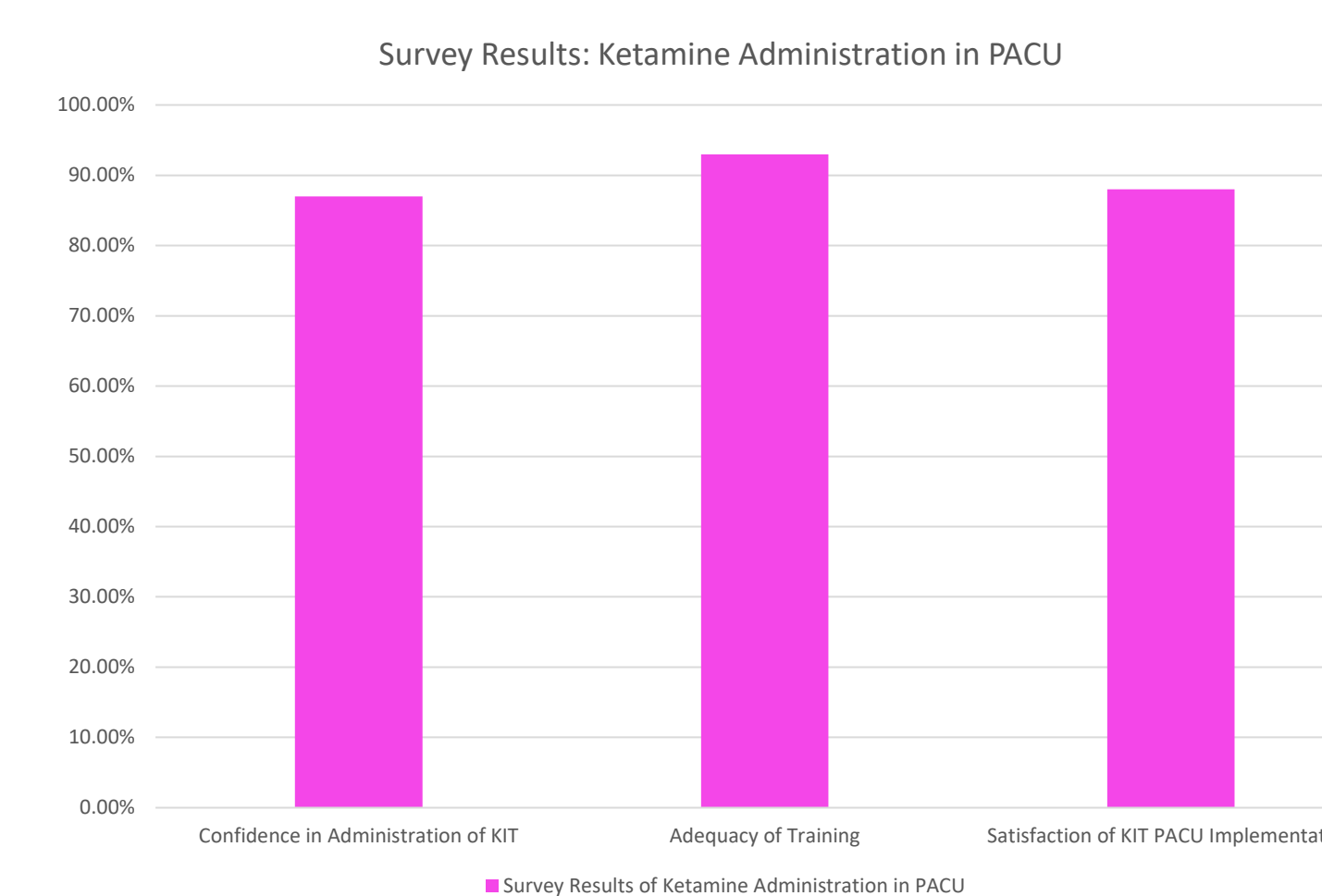
The PACU RN champion collaboratively worked with Mental Health and TRD specialists, Educators and Managers developing a multi-spectral learning plan ensuring patient safety and PACU RNs competency for this new practice.

## IV Ketamine Infusion Therapy

- Chronic Pain
- Depression
- OCD
- Depression
- Fibromyalgia
- Chronic Pain
- Suicidal Ideation



## Results



## Conclusions

**Statement of Successful Practice:** Since implementation in July 2023, ketamine infusion treatment was referred to 12 Veteran patients. 5 of them are inter-facility consults, only two were able to qualify. The treatment was initiated with TRD specialist monitoring patient's response during infusion. Dose administered is adjusted according to efficacy during treatment. The first Veteran's PHQ-9 score was 25 and now scored 4. There was no significant adverse event noted during the whole treatment process. PACU nurses demonstrated an all-embracing attitude, shared their insight as noted in the survey.

## References

American Psychiatric Nurses Association (APNA) <https://www.apna.org>  
 Psychopharmacology Bulletin 2021 Jun 1;51(3):109-124  
<https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-ketamine-addiction>  
 February 21,2021; Depression. World Health Organization.<http://www.who.int/en/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/depression> published January 30,2020  
 Bobo WV,Vande Voort JL, Croarkin PE, Leung JG, Tye SJ, Frye MA. Ketamine for treatment-resistant unipolar and bipolar major depression: Critical Review and implications for clinical practice February 21, 2021  
 SchwartzJ, Murrough JW, Iosifescu DV. Ketamine for treatment-resistant depression: Recent developments and clinical applications. Evid Based mental Health. 2016;19(2):35.