

## **SCRATCHING THE SURFACE: PREVENTION OF CORNEAL ABRASION IN THE PACU**

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**Identification of the problem-Overview:** Post anesthesia care unit (PACU) nurses concerned about corneal abrasions in PACU, developed evidence based practice team to view best practice standards. Knowledge deficit and practice variations noted among healthcare providers in relation to treatment and prevention of corneal abrasion.

**EP Question/Purpose:** “In perioperative patients, how does implementing preventive measures to address corneal abrasions compared to the standard nursing assessment affect the incidence of corneal abrasions within the PACU setting?” The purpose of this project was enhancing nursing knowledge, and creating a standardized process for PACU nurses in assessment, identification, and escalation of care for patients suspected of corneal abrasion.

**Methods/Evidence:** Literature review conducted using key words: corneal abrasions, prevention of corneal abrasions, corneal abrasions and perioperative care, eye injuries and general anesthesia, corneal abrasions and post-operative complications, corneal injury and surgery. Eighteen articles reviewed and data table compiled. We surveyed 34 nurses to evaluate knowledge on identification, assessment, nursing interventions and escalation process. Eighty-Two Percent of nurses were unsure of current escalation processes. Further evaluation of survey indicated opportunities for improvement on nursing interventions related to corneal abrasion.

### **Significance of Findings/Outcomes:**

- Develop standardized processes, including Corneal Abrasion Escalation flowchart for nurses.
- Use of ophthalmic ointments considered standards of care for patients receiving general anesthesia.
- Nursing interventions based on literature included avoiding O2 device contact on eyes, increasing eye surveillance in patients who had lateral positioning during surgery, preventing rubbing eyes, ensure pulse oximetry is on non-dominant hand, appropriate consultation and early treatment.
- Nursing education and implementation of Corneal Abrasion Escalation flowchart improved nursing knowledge and awareness of high risk patient population.
- Decreased incidence of Corneal Abrasion noted, as evident by patient safety reports.
- Resurvey staff 30, 60, 90 days post education assuring sustainability of nursing interventions and knowledge related to corneal abrasion.

**Implications of perianesthesia nurses and future research:** This evidence based project initiative suggests a standardized Corneal Abrasion practice for PACU nurses that will increase knowledge in assessment, identification, nursing interventions and escalation process to decrease the incidence of corneal abrasion in the PACU setting. Use of a flowchart can be utilized in PACU setting to assist nurses in proper escalation of care for suspected and identified corneal abrasion patients.