

Reducing Opioid Use with the Sound of Music

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Introduction: Many patients experience excruciating pain after bariatric surgery. Opioid administration is the current practice for pain control in the post-anesthesia care unit (PACU). With increasing concerns for opioid misuse, it is imperative to utilize non-pharmacological techniques such as music therapy to manage postoperative pain.

Identification of the problem: Opioid abuse has become an alarming epidemic in the United States. Creative interventions are vital in combatting the crisis at a prevention level. Opioids can also cause significant adverse reactions that can lead to an increased length of stay, delayed postoperative ambulation, and poor patient satisfaction.

EBP Question/Purpose: PICO question. Databases utilized. In bariatric surgery patients, does music therapy as an adjunct to standard care impact opioid use in the PACU compared to standard care alone? Databases utilized were PubMed and Ovid Emcare.

Methods/Evidence: PACU RNs implemented music therapy as an adjunct to pharmacotherapy in managing postoperative pain. Over 12 weeks, patients who had laparoscopic gastric sleeve or bypass procedures were randomly selected to receive music therapy immediately upon arriving in the PACU. Patients in the music group received pre-selected music therapy in addition to standard care. Patients in the control group did not receive music therapy.

Significance of Findings/Outcomes: The data revealed that patients who received music therapy were given 15.6% fewer opioids in the PACU compared to the control group. The data was further analyzed to determine if BMI or age contributed to opioid administration for patients in the music group. On average, patients with a BMI of 49 or less in the music group received fewer opioids than patients in the control group. The data reflected that music had the greatest impact on patients in the 30-39 and 50-59 age groups.

Implications for perianesthesia nurses and future research: Music therapy is an effective, low-cost intervention that can reduce opioid use for bariatric patients in the immediate postoperative period. The project team desires to explore the impact of music therapy on other surgical populations and to expand its use in all phases of acute care.