

What's that Smell in PreOp?

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Introduction: Aromatherapy is a complementary therapy that employs essential oils to promote comfort and a healing environment. Providing patients aromatherapy containers can help provide distraction and relaxation for patients without requiring pharmacological or other interventions.

Identification of the Problem: Patients arrive for surgery a few hours prior to their surgery start time. At times, there are unexpected delays that can prolong their stay in the preoperative setting. Patients are often nervous or anxious in anticipation for their surgery and at times become frustrated with surgical delays.

QI Question/Purpose of the Study: Can offering Aromatherapy to patients in the preoperative setting help distract patients while waiting for surgery? Our objective was to increase nursing knowledge on aromatherapy and to provide this independent nursing function to our preoperative patients.

Methods:

- Healing Services department to the nursing team
- Provided staff with a online learning module to complete prior to the implementation of the QI project
- Supply Chain ordered the aromatherapy containers
- Nursing Research Institute gave approval for survey to be distributed to the patients
- Conducted a nursing team meeting and provided email communications
- Gained Leadership and nursing team buy-in
- Provided preoperative patients the surveys to obtain feedback on the aromatherapy use/benefits.

Outcomes/Results: Answers to the 102 Surveys collected in 3 months:

- Did you use Aromatherapy? Yes- 102, No- 0, Unsure N/A
- What this the first time you ever used aromatherapy? Yes- 63, No-35, Unsure- 4, N/A-0
- Would you like to see aromatherapy offered in the preoperative setting? Yes-87, No-3, Unsure-12

Scents Used:

- Lavender-55
- Peppermint Ginger-18
- Lavender/Ginger-30
- Chai-26
- Citrus-11
- Spearmint-6
- Unsure of Scent-0
- Not applicable-0

Discussion: The Quality Improvement project showed positive results. Patients enjoyed being offered the aromatherapy containers as a distraction while waiting to go to surgery. Patients commented on the survey that they enjoyed the multiple aromatherapy scents that were offered.

Conclusion: Perioperative nurses are more knowledgeable about aromatherapy and are empowered to initiate this modality in their clinical practice. This initiative assisted patients with presurgical distractions and increased overall patient experience.

Implications for perianesthesia nurses and future research: Continuing to offer aromatherapy in the preoperative setting has opened the nurses curiosity to offering the aromatherapy containers to the patients in the PACU setting.