

Perianesthesia Pregnancy Testing Quality Improvement Project

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Introduction: Perianesthesia pregnancy testing is important for ensuring patient safety and autonomy. Adhering to professional standards and ethical guidelines ensures individualized care, mitigates risks, and promotes optimal outcomes. Facilitating informed consent empowers patients to make informed decisions, particularly in sensitive areas like pregnancy testing. Concerns raised by OHSU nurses highlighted the need for a review of current practices.

Identification of the Problem: An SBAR was presented to the Recovery Pre-Post Best Practice Committee which led to a survey of 400 staff members, including nurses, ancillary staff, anesthesiologists, and surgeons, to assess their understanding and experience of pregnancy testing. Over 130 responses revealed gaps in protocol comprehension, variability in practice, staff discomfort, inadequate documentation, and opportunities to enhance inclusiveness. A review of patient safety event reports confirmed that related issues had been escalated, further supporting the need for investigation. A workgroup was formed.

QI Question/Purpose of the Study: This quality improvement project aims to enhance the consistency and quality of perianesthesia pregnancy testing practices by ensuring informed consent, respecting patient dignity and autonomy, and addressing documentation and workflow gaps through standardization.

Methods: A multidisciplinary workgroup of nurse leaders, adult and pediatric staff nurses, an OB-GYN physician, a nurse informaticist, and a pediatric anesthesiologist met and reviewed survey data, conducted a literature review, and identified priority interventions. Initially focused on changes to the electronic health record (EHR), the group determined that a standardized educational consent form would be more effective for patient education and clear testing choices.

Outcomes/Results: An educational consent form, modeled on best practices and ASA recommendations, was developed for adult patients (≥ 18 years old) who are admitting to pre-post units for a procedure or surgery. The form was reviewed for gender neutrality, health literacy, and legal compliance. Educating patients on risks related to anesthesia and pregnancy and guiding them through a thorough self-assessment helps empower them to make informed decisions. The form also minimizes provider bias and aids in improving EHR documentation. The form will be trialed in one to two adult pre-post units in March 2025. Trials will involve staff education and data collection with goals of improving and standardizing pregnancy testing, and related documentation and workflows.

Discussion: This project identified key opportunities to improve perianesthesia pregnancy testing protocols. A multidisciplinary group worked collaboratively to design a new form and process for engaging patients about pregnancy testing. By developing a standardized process, it aims to reduce practice variability, enhance patient safety, and uphold

autonomy. Learnings from implementation with the adult population will help to inform future improvements in the pediatric setting.

Conclusion: This project lays the foundation for improved pregnancy testing practices at OHSU, with broader implementation expected after initial trials.

Implications for perianesthesia nurses and future research: Standardizing pregnancy testing workflows enhances patient-centered care, boosts staff confidence, and promotes a more streamlined, dignified process.