

Reducing surgical schedule disruptions by improving preoperative education and communication.



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BACKGROUND

- Preoperative fasting is important for patient safety when preparing for surgery. NPO violations lead to surgical cancellations, underutilized OR time, and dissatisfied providers and patients.
- An increase in preoperative fasting violations was observed subjectively and confirmed by a review of department surgical cancellation data.
- Two common contributors to the problem were discovered: Patients did not understand why they were fasting, and they did not remember the verbal telephonic instructions provided.
- A review of evidence confirmed that nursing-provided education and information validation were effective methods for improving fasting adherence^{1,2}.

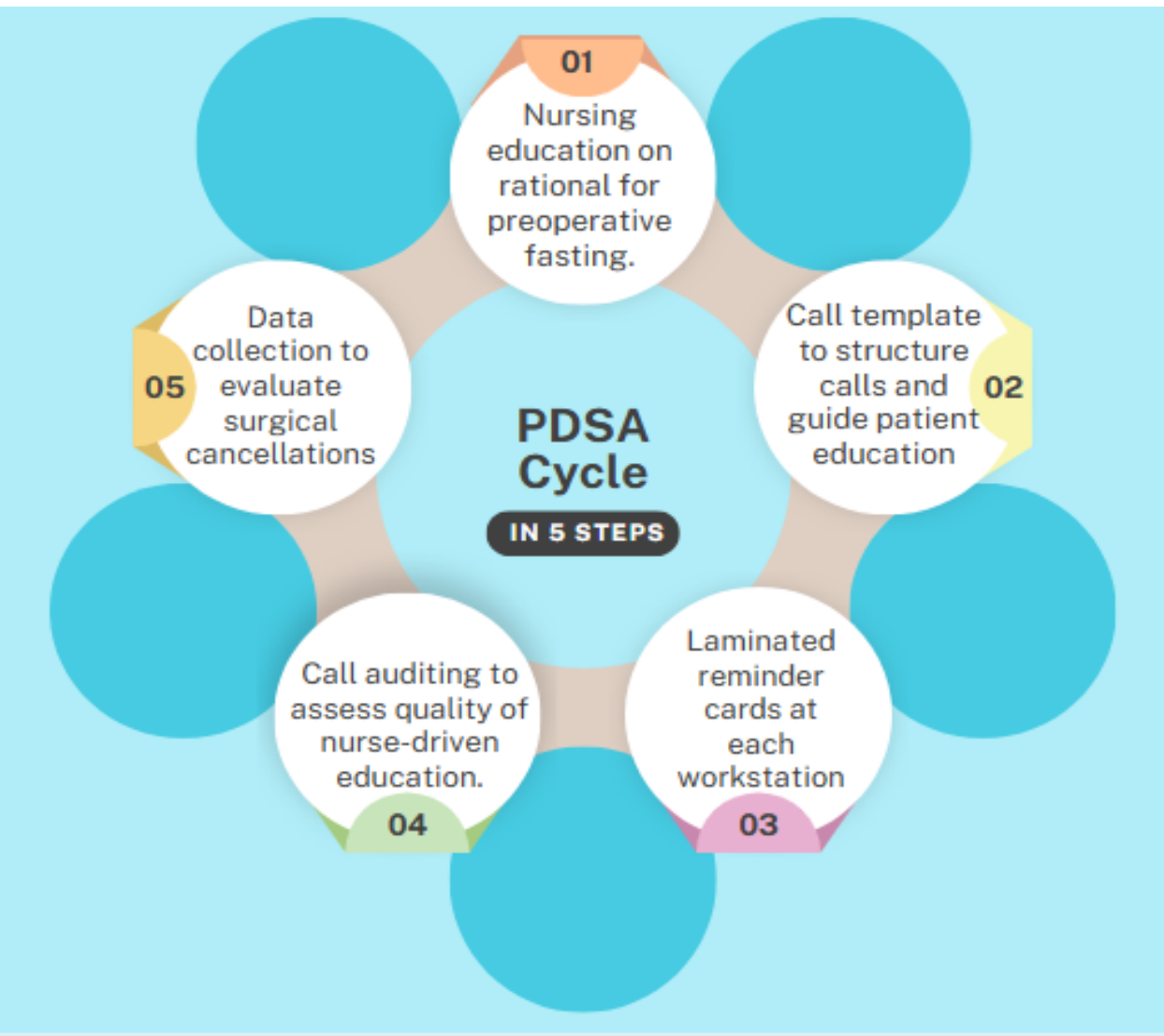
OBJECTIVE

This project sought to reduce surgical delays and cancellations by improving the exchange of information between the nurse and the patient during preoperative instructions phone calls.

Two best practices were identified that would be used to achieve this objective:

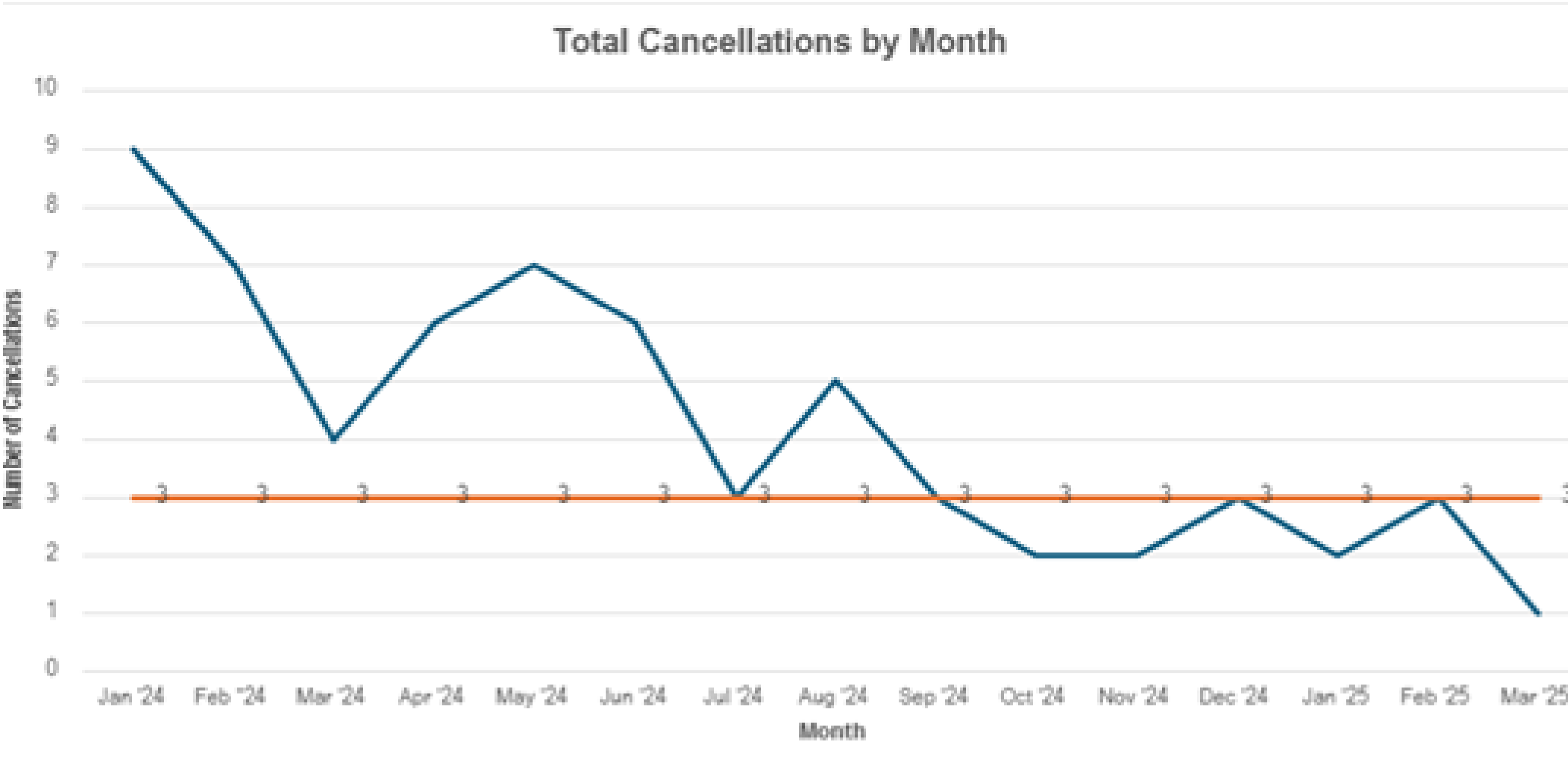
- Nursing-led education on the rationale for preoperative fasting^{3,4}.
- Using the teach-back method to validate patient learning and identify misunderstandings².

METHODS



RESULTS

- Fasting-related surgical cancellations were reduced by 50% during the project conducted between August 1st and October 1st of 2024.
- Fasting-related surgical delays were reduced by 39% during the project implementation period.
- The nursing team achieved >80% compliance with project participation, validated by documentation audits.
- The methods and tools developed in this project have led to sustained reductions in preoperative fasting violations and have fostered ongoing improvement in phone instruction processes.



CONCLUSIONS

- The pre-op instructions call is an effective time to educate patients on the importance of preoperative fasting.
- Understanding the risks of perioperative aspiration may improve adherence to instructions.
- The teach-back technique is an effective way to identify misunderstandings and increase patient engagement.
- This project demonstrates how nursing-led education leads to greater adherence to instructions, improved health literacy, and reduced surgical cancellations.

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