

**Crossing The Line:  
Improving Post-operative Care at Discharge in the Community Hospital**

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**Introduction:** An assessment revealed perianesthesia nurses had knowledge gaps in postoperative care and discharge education, which could affect patient care and satisfaction. Nurses felt their limited knowledge of intraoperative events restricted their ability to answer patient questions and provide comprehensive discharge instructions.

Inspired by a study where intradepartmental shadowing improved communication (Hailu et al., 2020), a similar program was created. The initiative aimed to have perianesthesia nurses shadow in the operating room (OR) to better understand the patient's surgical journey. This would enable them to provide more competent, effective, and informative patient care and education.

**Identification of the Problem:** An OR shadowing program was implemented for perianesthesia nurses to address knowledge gaps and improve discharge. The program's goal was to enhance nurses' understanding of the patient's intraoperative experience, improving their competence in postoperative care and discharge education.

**EPB Question/Purpose:** For Perianesthesia RNs, does implementing an OR shadowing initiative, compared to current practice, improve nurse competence in postoperative care and patient satisfaction related to discharge education and readmission rates over 3 months?

**Methods/Evidence:** Nurses participated in a three-month OR shadowing program. To provide first-hand experience, they shadowed a circulating nurse during six predetermined surgeries. The validated Nurse Professional Competence (NPC) Scale measured nurse competence before, immediately after, and six weeks post-program. The program monitored patient satisfaction scores, discharge comments, and 30-day readmission rates.

**Significance of Findings/Outcomes:** Nurses who participated in the shadowing program showed notable improvements. The group's average NPC score increased by 10.54% (from 83.54% to 94%) at the six-week follow-up. Nine nurses exceeded the group's average improvement. Five nurses improved by over 20%, with one nurse seeing a 30% increase.

Over four months, patient satisfaction scores for discharge instructions improved from 75% to 100%. The 30-day surgical readmission rate decreased from 3.06% to 2.04% over three months. Patient comments also reflected increased satisfaction with discharge education and nurse competence.

**Implications for perianesthesia nurses and future research:**

- Implementing a structured OR shadowing program improves perianesthesia nurses' perceived competence and improves patient hand-off and post-operative care.
- The program should expand to include nurses on inpatient surgical floors.
- Patient satisfaction and readmission rates should be monitored for continued impact.