Enhancing Patients' Pain Experience: One Unit's Innovative Approach to Pain

University of California Davis Medical Center, Sacramento, California

Leah P. Delim, BSN, RN, CMSRN, Amanda Cocher, BSN, RN, CMSRN, & Eric Moore, BSN, RN, MSN, NEA-BC

Purpose:
Patients who suffer from uncontrolled pain express dissatisfaction with the care provided as reflected in the units' Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (HCAHPS) and Press Ganey Survey. Concern about patients' satisfaction and well-being led to the Unit Based Practice Council's development of a project, focusing on improved communication and advocacy to enhance the patients' pain experience.

Background:
The Medical-Surgical Specialty Unit is a 24 bed unit that manages acute medical surgical patients with a wide range of diagnoses and care needs. The unit serves as a specialty unit for the management of acute care ventilator patients with the goal of maximizing respiratory status and weaning from the ventilator. The unit provides palliative care to patients with the goal of improving the quality of life. Staff includes 45 RNs.

Goals/Objectives:
- To improve patients' pain control
- To increase education and communication surrounding patients and staff
- To improve patient and family satisfaction and perceptions

Process:
1) A needs assessment for the staff was conducted as well as a pre-test on pain management. The results led to extensive staff education on pain assessment, common types of pain encountered, and appropriate medications.

2) Interventions were incorporated and best practices were identified and put into practice:
   - Purposeful hourly rounding by RN
   - Improved Patient Education and Communication
   - "Bedside shift reports to include patients"
   - "Whiteboard used for improved communication"
   - "Establishing patient goals, and pain regimen"
   - "A brochure about pain management for patients and their families was created and put into use"

Results:
Once interventions were integrated into the daily workflow, continued evaluation through peer audits, counseling and ongoing nurse education was implemented.
1. Improved Nurse-Patient trusting relationship
2. Data showed increase in patient perceptions related to better communication with nursing and an increase in pain control.

Conclusion:
By collaborating with nursing staff, physicians, patients and their families, the unit's interventions were shown to improve patient outcomes by improving patients' pain experience and their hospital stay.

References:
OSF Pain Brochure, St. James-John W. Albrecht Medical Center, Pontiac, IL. March 2007
http://champ.bsd.uchicago.edu/PalliativeCare/documents/PCPocketCard2010