

8. Perianesthesia Nursing Management & Safety GeoAnesthesia 2024

Dr. Jennifer Ruth Orkin, DNAP, CRNA

The single-most important aspect of nursing management throughout the perianesthesia process is effective communication. Current studies point to the complexities of today's patient populations due to comorbidities and polypharmacy.¹ An average surgical patient may have nearly 30 health care providers during their inpatient admission, and patients with these comorbidities are often on nearly 20 medications.¹ However, nurses are reportedly interrupted every other minute while attempting to safely and accurately administer these medications.¹ A Sentinel Event, as defined by Joint Commission, is a failure in patient safety resulting in serious harm or death.² The overwhelming majority of reported Sentinel Events in 2023 occurred in hospital settings with the highest percentages of safety failures classified as patient falls (51%), accidental retention of a foreign object (8%), and wrong site surgeries (8%).² The data underscores the vital importance of the preoperative time out and a culture of nursing engagement in patient safety initiatives throughout the perioperative period. Joint Commission ranked the risks of patient falls for 2023 in order of ambulation, falling out of bed, and toileting.² Prevention of falls may be achieved by ensuring staff education around the clinical manifestations of poor balance, early completion of fall risk assessments, and improving nursing communication related to individual patient activity limitations.² Foreign object retention occurred as a result of poor team communication, failure to follow institutional policies such as ensuring correct counts before surgical closure, and narrow focus hindering situational awareness.² An inadequate or completely missed time out, poor situational awareness, and a lack of understanding among team members contributed to wrong site surgeries.² Complacency is a risk of fatigue and routine leading to healthcare burnout. One method of combatting this well-studied phenomenon is to develop a mentoring program to nurture nurses with a holistic approach. Just as we provide care for countless patients, it is vital to refuel ourselves as caregivers to prevent the inevitable toll the profession will take, leading to unintentional errors, shortcuts, loss of enthusiasm, and a diminished passion for nursing. If a nurse is experiencing burnout, it is a great idea to cross-train in a new department to challenge the employee and build new relationships in hopes to support the employee toward total wellness, which ultimately strengthens the institution.

References

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