Evaluating and Educating Adult Post-Operative Day 1 Patients on Pain Management

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**Significance**

- Pain is a complex process that has proven to be difficult to resolve as pain is subjective.
- The Joint Commission stressed the importance of pain being the “fifth vital sign”.
- The goal of proper post-operative pain management is to lessen pain to expedite the recovery and avoid complications.
  - Uncontrolled pain can affect a patient’s overall well-being – their sleep, ability to heal, appetite, and mental health.
- Currently at LVHN, there is no defined tool used by all health care professionals to educate patients on their pain management and relief.
  - “Your New Medicines & The Most Common Side Effects” Sheet

**Purpose**

- The purpose of this EBP research project was to determine whether educating adult post-operative day 1 patients* on pain management, through teach back, would be beneficial.
  - Excluding post-operative kidney transplant patients

**Implementation**

- An assessment packet was developed that included simple and concise instructions for the RNs to collect patient data in addition to a pre-assessment, teach back, and post-assessment.
- The assessment packets were placed in a centralized location on 4KS and 7K, making it easy for the RNs to pick up a packet(s) in the beginning of their shift and drop the completed packet(s) off at the end of their shift.
- After 18 days, the data was collected and analyzed.

**Evidence**

- In spite of increased knowledge, effective post-operative pain management continues to be a major challenge.
- Nurses and physicians often underestimate patients’ post-operative pain.
- A major problem in pain relief has been the inadequate communication between nurses and their patients.
- Understanding a patient’s prior-to-admission medications could positively impact their post-operative pain management.
  - Orthopedic surgical patients can present with tolerance and dependence as opioids are used to treat their chronic pain.
- Emphasizing the importance of utilizing pain medications before pain is severe.
  - Severe pain is difficult to treat as it takes time for medications to take effect.
- Why is teach back beneficial to patients?
  - Educating patients goes beyond simply providing patients with information; it empowers patients to be an active participant in their health care.
  - Health care professionals tend to direct their focus on education materials, rather than assessing the patient’s prior knowledge.
  - Studies show that with better education, patients have a more thorough understanding of their pain medications leading them to utilize the medications appropriately.

**Discoveries**

- This project was designed to assess patients’ baseline knowledge prior to teach back and whether their knowledge improved following teach back.
- Pre-assessment: 38% of patients were knowledgeable
- Post-assessment: 60% of patients were knowledgeable
- Barriers
  - Measuring pain (subjective), patient’s ability to retain information/education while in pain, desire to have 0 out of 10 pain post-operatively, and nurses workload.

**Future Goals**

- Train the clinical staff on how to properly evaluate and educate their post-operative patients using the assessment and teach back tool.
- Implement the pain assessment and teach back tool to Medical-Surgical units throughout LVHN Cedar Crest.
- Improve HCAPPS on pain education, management, and relief.

REFERENCES


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