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Nursing Education for Non-Pharmacological Gas Pain Management in Post-Operative Abdominal Surgery Patients

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**Purpose**

- Provide education for nurses regarding proper assessment of gas pain in postoperative patients with abdominal surgery and the usage of different non-pharmaceutical methods as treatment for gas pain.

**Evidence**

- “Debilitating gas pain is a common sequel for patients who have undergone abdominal surgery.” (Moore, 1995)
- “…good nursing care demands a more active approach than simply limiting opiate analgesia.” (Moore, 1995)
- “Patients can benefit to some degree from suggestions that given in a believable context.” (Disbrow, 1993)

**Methods**

- Inclusion Criteria: Nurses who work on 4KS/4K, who have regular contact with patients that underwent abdominal surgery, were surveyed regarding their current practice for gas pain assessment and interventions.
- Education was provided via an informative handout that was reviewed with each individual nurse.
- A post-survey was performed to assess if gas pain assessment and the usage of non-opioid interventions to alleviate flatus was improved.

**Outcomes**

**How often do you assess incisional versus gas pain?**

**Before Education**

- Often: 33%
- Always: 67%

**After Education**

- Often: 83%
- Always: 17%

**Nursing Interventions Used to Help Alleviate Gas Pain**

- Walking: 17% (Before), 6% (After)
- Massage: 8% (Before), 13% (After)
- Rocking: 3% (Before), 1% (After)
- Other: 69% (Before), 81% (After)

**Results**

- Our evidence showed that increased education provided nurses with a better understanding of the importance in identifying gas versus incisional pain.
- Post survey showed an increase in variety of methods that were being used to help alleviate gas pain including:
  - Abdominal massage, gum chewing, repositioning and rocking

**Conclusions**

- Additional education increased nursing awareness on the proper mechanisms to assess gas pain.
- The education provided nurses with new interventions to provide patient care.
- To elaborate on this project, the effectiveness of the interventions should be evaluated through patient feedback.
- Additional non-opiate methods of alleviating gas pain need to be explored.


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