Creation of a Standard Process for Post-Anesthesia Notes

The Problem:

The Center for Medicare Services (CMS) requires that patients who receive anesthesia have a post-anesthesia note completed within 48 hours of surgery. This note must include specific elements (Respiratory function, Cardiovascular function, Mental status, Temperature, Pain, Nausea and vomiting, Postoperative hydration). Further, the patient must have recovered adequately to actively participate in the evaulation. Our practice has been to write this note while the patient is in the PACU so we can maximize compliance.

Chart reviews indicated that about 15% of patients do not receive a note. The recent CMS survey indicated that most notes did not meet full compliance with regards to content or patient participation.

Aim/Goal:

To design a process that would ensure appropriate content and patient participation for the post-anesthesia note.

The Team

- Eswar Sundar, MD: Anesthesia Director PACU
- Sudan Dorion RN: Nurse Manager PACU
- Mary Ellis RN: Administrative Clinical Advisor East PACU
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- Michele Micale: Health Information Management
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The Interventions

- A form has been generated that includes all CMS elements of the postanesthesia note. (See Results Section)
- Anesthesia staff have been educated about requirements
- A new process for writing these notes has been created:
 - Anesthesia staff will not always write a note on their own patients when dropping them off in the PACU
 - The PACU nurse will place a sign on the chart when a patient has recovered enough to participate in the process
 - > The next anesthesia provider who comes to the PACU will assess the patient and write a note
 - > No patient may be discharged from the PACU without a note

The Results: Post-Anesthesia Form

Note: All 6 items must be addressed. Any items that can not be answered "Yes", must be addressed in the comments section.		
Vital signs appropriate	Yes	☐ No :
Respiratory function appropriate; airway patent	Yes	□ No :
Cardiovascular function and hydration status appropriate	Yes	□ No :
Patient awake and alert and participates in evaluation Or	Yes	1 No :
Patient sleepy but easily arousable and responsive and participates in evaluation	☐ Yes	☐ No :
Pain control satisfactory	☐ Yes	□ No :
Nausea and vomiting control satisfactory	Yes	□ No :
Additional Comments:		

Lessons Learned:

Note formatted after template from American Society of Anesthesia.

Engagement with PACU nurses helpful in process. This system was designed to decrease the need to page staff to write notes.

Next Steps:

Following staff review and implementation, regular chart reviews and staff feedback will occur to ensure compliance.





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