Visitation in the Post Anesthesia Care Unit (PACU): An Evidence Based Practice Approach
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Problem:
Patient/Family responses on the Satisfaction Survey related to the Family Visitation Process at Texas Health Harris Methodist Hospital Fort Worth, provided an opportunity for the Post Anesthesia Care Unit (PACU) to review its visitation policy. The visitation process lacked structure and offered many opportunities for miscommunication among caregivers.

Evidence:
A review of the literature supports addressing both patients and families need for comfort, reassurance and proximity in the postoperative period as beneficial. The literature also revealed a discrepancy between research findings and current clinical practice. Staff survey results, conducted on PACU visitation, supports the literature recommendations.

Strategy:
PACU nurses, working with administration, developed an organized visitation process to increase communication with families of surgical patients throughout their hospital journey.

Practice change:
- Waiting Area liaison position created
- Signage to be posted
- Educational brochure for visitors
- 1 visitor per patient within 60 minutes of arrival to PACU
- Electronic Tracking Board implementation

Evaluation:
Staff Survey results mirrored the literature. Ongoing monitoring of Press-Ganey (patient satisfaction data) from PACU is mixed in with Pre-assessment, Pre-op and Surgery, making it difficult to evaluate practice change.

Results:
Initial Patient satisfaction scores increased and comments from visitors have been positive, however, current scores have been falling and inconsistencies remain:
- 1 visitor is permitted with exceptions for special circumstances
- Waiting Area Liaison position remains unfilled
- No signage has been added
- Educational Brochure has not been distributed
- Electronic Track Board use is inconsistent

Recommendations:
The survey revealed that more education is needed on the benefits of visitation. This project supports the literature/recommendations. Although a majority of staff would want visitation if they or a member of their family were in the PACU, less than half feel it is appropriate for families to visit in the PACU.
Lessons Learned: Without education and consistent evaluation, the guidelines do not sustain themselves.

Bibliography


