Problem: Alcohol Withdrawal Syndrome (AWS) is plaguing area hospitals and creating a puzzle for health care professionals to solve in terms of how to manage patient care. Excessive alcohol consumption is the third leading preventable cause of death in the United States.

Evidence: Excess consumption is associated with multiple adverse health effects such as cancers, liver cirrhosis, unintentional injuries and violence. Research has shown the development of a standardized order set will assist in coordinating the care of patients affected by AWS.

Strategy: The purpose of the presentation is to educate health care professionals regarding AWS as a disease, offer the best treatment options and to describe one nurse’s commitment to developing a standardized order set to improve patient outcomes. The order set is divided into three sections and each has escalating doses of benzodiazepines used to treat alcohol withdrawal.

Practice Change: The nursing staff has received education on the form and how to closely assess the patient population using the Riker Sedation-Agitation Scale. Medical staff will also be educated and the enthusiasm heard from all health care staff for proper treatment recommendations is astounding. The order set promotes collaboration between nursing and physician colleagues.

Evaluation & Results: Baseline data is being collected on the way we currently treat patients experiencing AWS in regard to length of stay, outcomes and type of treatment. There are no results to report at this time.

Recommendations: If patients are treated in an appropriate way, the end result for the patients and health care staff is positive. Given the seriousness of this dilemma, the value of appropriate treatment in preventing morbidity and mortality, the development of an evidence-based guideline would have widespread value.

Lessons Learned: Developing and implementing new protocols/order sets can be challenging. Providing education regarding the topic and the importance of interdisciplinary teamwork helps to facilitate the process.

Bibliography: