Guideline Development to Improve Safety of Intrahospital Transport
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**Problem:** Transport of acutely ill patients throughout the hospital can be potentially unsafe and place the patient at an increased risk for complications, morbidity and mortality. Limited resources such as expertise of transport staff and equipment also add to the potential for complications during transport.

**Evidence:** Acutely ill patients being transported to the operating room or procedural areas experience additional physiological stress. Adverse events during transport related to equipment, personnel and patient acuity occur in up to 70 percent of transports. There is a wide variation in practice and no guidelines exist for the intrahospital transport of the non ICU patient.

**Strategy:** A multidisciplinary group researched best practice for intrahospital transport. A standard of care was established for the transport of the non ICU patient requiring continuous monitoring to improve patient outcomes during transport.

**Practice Change:** Existing policies were revised and a new “Standard of care for Patients Being Transported with or without a Cardiac Monitor” was implemented. These guidelines standardized monitoring equipment and included a checklist and transport box. Transport personnel qualifications were also established.

**Evaluation:** Data were collected in June of 2011 and February 2012 using a process review tool to measure compliance in utilizing appropriate equipment and personnel for the transport of non ICU patients.

**Results:** Transports of patients requiring continuous monitoring were 80% compliant in June 2011 and 91.3% compliant in February 2012. Many of these transports were to higher levels of care such as to transitional care units.

**Recommendations:** Development of a specialized transport team may further reduce transport events. Implementation of a standardized approach to hand-off communications, including the opportunity to ask and respond to questions can also improve outcomes.

**Lessons Learned:** Adherence to the standard of care provides staffing challenges when RNs must leave their unit to transport a monitored patient. Additional staff education and compliance are crucial to continued improvement of patient safety during transport.

**Bibliography:**

