Using Nurse-Identified Barriers to Impact Patient Satisfaction Scores  
Jeannette M. Meyer, RN, MSN, CCRN, CCNS, PCCN, ACHPN  
Santa Monica UCLA Medical Center & Orthopaedic Hospital  
Kimberly A. Ternavan

**Problem:** An Orthopaedic unit in a 277 bed community hospital associated with an academic medical center was reporting challenges in management and documentation of their patients’ pain.

**The Evidence:** Appropriate pain management has been correlated with patient satisfaction,1 improved patient outcomes or achieving a peaceful death.2,3,4 However, nurses have identified multiple barriers to providing appropriate pain management.5,6,7,8

These barriers can vary based on location and nursing population5,6,7,8 and can include such factors as staffing challenges, lack of empowerment, and need for education.

**Strategy:** Approximately 100 orthopaedic nurses were asked to identify their barriers to delivering and documenting excellent pain management. These barriers were found to fall within four basic categories: Physicians (58%), Pharmacy (20%) Patients (23%) and Nursing (19%).

**Practice Change:** The Unit Director took the information from each of these categories and coordinated meetings between herself, nurses and unit educators with Physician groups and the Pharmacy Director to discuss barriers and brainstorm solutions.

**Evaluation:** Improvement was evaluated using:

- Patient Satisfaction Scores measured by Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (HCAHPS)
- Pain Documentation Auditing based on questions from the National Database of Nurse Quality Indicators (NDNQI).

**Results:** Since the implementation of the Pain Barriers Project, the Orthopaedic Unit has seen an increase in its Patient Satisfaction Scores pertaining to pain (as measured by HCAHPS). In the question: ‘During this hospital stay, how often was your pain well controlled?’ the unit’s score went from 59.7% to 70.1%. In the pain documentation auditing, the unit has shown an improvement in all measures to 100%.

**Recommendations:** Success in patient outcomes is difficult to achieve unless the barriers that practitioners face are identified and acted upon.

**Lessons Learned:**

- “Going to the source” is an effective method of identifying barriers to patient satisfaction and documentation challenges.
- Identification of barriers alone is not enough. Barriers must be acted upon in order to achieve improved outcomes.
Bibliography:


