Decreased Recovery Time with Postoperative Pain Assessment in a PACU

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Determined to improve the quality of patient care, the PACU team at ABC Hospital is on a mission to reduce postoperative pain management time by providing its nurses with advanced knowledge and skills.

**Global Aim:** To improve the quality of patient care, which directly aligns with the institution’s priorities of providing high-quality care at an affordable cost.

**Project Aim:** To reduce the length of postoperative recovery time by providing its nurses with advanced knowledge and skills in pain management.

**Background:**
- Setting: The average Total Knee Arthroplasty (TKA) surgery case per day is five cases in the PACU unit. Forty PACU nurses in the unit provide care for patients recovering from general, regional, and local anesthesia. The planned project is to provide the PACU for nurses with education on effective pain management.

**Quality Gap:** A baseline of recovery time is 120 minutes for Total Knee Arthroplasty with regional nerve block by providing those patients with proper pain management during the first twenty-four hours of their stay in the PACU.

**Evidence:** Improper postoperative pain assessment increased recovery time in the PACU. Adequate pain control decreases readmissions and length of stay, which directly aligns with the institution’s priorities of providing high-quality care at an affordable cost (Donigian et al., 2022).

**SWOT Analysis:**
- **Strengths:**
  - Quality improvement PACU patient care
  - High workload in PACU
  - *Post-Intervention* Financial savings

- **Weaknesses:**
  - Knowledge Barriers
  - Workflow interruption

- **Opportunities:**
  - Empowered PACU Nurse
  - High quality & cost-effective services

- **Threats:**
  - Enjoyment of the work
  - Quality anxiety
  - Economic and reimbursement issues

**Evaluation:**
- **Process Measure:**
  - % patient with PACU order set used
  - % patients with PACU order set used
  - % of patients with documented pain plan in medical record
- **Outcomes:**
  - % reduced PACU LOS
  - % patient with documented pain plan in medical record
  - *Patient satisfaction scores '6'.

**Results:**
- **Outcome Measure:**
  - A total of 20 PACU nurses participate in the quality improvement project between March and July, 2023.
  - 15 PACU nurses were completed acute postoperative pain management training for four weeks.
  - A total of 15 patient surveys were collected by post op follow-up phone calls.
  - 90% impact on patient satisfaction scores noted from Patient PACU survey exceeding the goal of 70%.

**References:**
- Acknowledgements: ABC Hospital PACU leadership members