

Enhancing the Use of Opioid Sparing Protocol in the PACU

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Introduction: Opioids serve as the cornerstone for severe acute post-operative pain management in the PACU. Opioids have been used for their quick onset and efficacy without analgesic ceiling yet have significant side effects. The Opioid Sparing Protocol was developed to provide pain relief to post knee and hip arthroplasty while minimizing narcotics and allowing rapid rehabilitation and faster discharge.

Identification of the problem: Acute post-operative pain remains a major problem, resulting in the multiple undesirable outcomes if inadequately controlled. In the PACU setting, opioid use is common as the primary treatment for post-operative pain.

Purpose of the study: The purpose of the study is to assess the impact of the Opioid Sparing Protocol on opioid-naïve patients in the PACU post knee and hip arthroplasty.

Methods: Retrospective analysis by chart review of 200 comparable cases, from each period, for implementation of the Opioid Sparing Protocol pre-intervention (Q2, 2018) and post-intervention (Q2, 2019).

Outcomes/Results: Significant increase in the use of Tramadol (+242.86%), along with reduction in the use of Percocet (-44.44%) and Oxycodone (-56.52%) have shown to be effective in providing analgesia and improved patient outcomes.

Discussion: There is an ongoing effort to develop strategies for safe and effective alleviation of post-operative pain. This analysis of comparable cases shows that changes in pain management methodologies can lead to positive results for the patient's surgical experience and post-operative clinical outcome.

Conclusion: Utilizing the multimodal approach outlined in the Opioid Sparing Protocol provides consistent pain relief while reducing opioid requirements and opioid related events. Effective management of acute pain in the PACU results in reduced PACU length of stay and improved patient outcomes.

Implications for perianesthesia nurses and future research: As health care professionals, it is our responsibility to provide safe and effective pain management. Considering the heavy societal cost of the opioid crisis, enhanced pain management addresses opioid misuse. The challenge for the healthcare workforce is to develop new, effective and non-addictive approaches to pain management.