

Examining Tools, Processes & Resources to Promote Communication and Teamwork in the Perioperative Setting : One-Page Summary

Background

Adverse events occur with greater frequency in surgical patients as compared to other patients in the healthcare system. One of the leading causes of these events is communication failure between care providers. Information shared between providers at 'handover' or 'handoffs' can be missed or inaccurate and have negative effects on patient care and safety.

Objectives

In the Canadian context, CPSI has undertaken the goal of accelerating the pace and dissemination of patient safety improvements by developing a national strategy on patient safety. The purpose of this report was to provide a review of findings from the literature regarding tools and resources that support effective communication and teamwork in the perioperative setting as a key focus in delivering safe surgical care to patients and families.

Results

Preoperative Period: The checklists and processes were related to transfer of required documentation and patient preoperative preparation. Evidence suggests that preoperative preparation of the patient increases efficiency and improves patient preparation to prevent surgical cancelations and further optimizes patient surgical outcomes.

Intraoperative Period: The Surgical Safety Checklist (SSC) was the most commonly described process or tool. Evidence suggests that in general, standardization of intraoperative communication during transitions of care improves teamwork, communication and patient outcomes by reducing mortality and complications associated with surgery.

Postoperative Period: Various interprofessional tools and resources and the use of communication mnemonics such as SBAR, ISBAR, I PASS THE BATON were described to improve the quality and satisfaction with the handover, teamwork,

communication and information transfer in various adult and paediatric postoperative settings.

Grey Literature

Websites and links for provincial, territorial and First Nations health ministries, health quality councils, health authorities across Canada and professional organizations provide a variety of resources, guidelines, references and toolkits for promoting effective communication, interprofessional collaboration and improvements in perioperative practice.

Recommendations

Recommendations for standardizing handover process arising from the literature include: engage frontline staff during the development and implementation of the handover processes, address local context, ensure simple and easy to use process. TeamSTEPPS Canada™ provides a structured framework to support teamwork and implementation of patient safety initiatives. Support and creation of patient safety leadership training and infrastructure are crucial for successful implementation and sustainability of any standardized process.