Clinical Nurse Specialist Contributions to Care Delivery: Creating a Pain Management Registered Nurse Model of Care

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Purpose/Objectives:
The purpose of this initiative was to develop staff nurses into Pain Management Registered Nurses (PMRNs) to provide night coverage for the Acute Pain Service (APS) patients receiving either epidural or regional catheters for post-operative analgesia.

Significance:
Research has shown that effective pain management promotes earlier mobilization, reduces hospital length of stay, postoperative complications and costs.

Background/Rationale:
At Duke University Hospital, anesthesiology residents covered the APS patients from 11 pm to 7 am, while also responsible for operating rooms. Consequently, APS patients did not consistently receive prompt and adequate pain management. In recognition of this barrier to effective pain management, administrators, physicians and the APS Clinical Nurse Specialists (CNSs) collaborated to develop the PMRN role.

Description:
The initiative involved recruiting and educating staff nurses to deliver care based on the same protocols that the APS CNSs utilize. Four night shift orthopedic charge nurses participated in the six week APS orientation. The orientation consisted of didactic readings and classes, one-to-one clinical experience, case studies and a skills day to demonstrate and validate clinical competencies. Ongoing competency maintenance and assessment is achieved through quarterly meetings and an annual refresher week with the APS CNSs.

Outcome:
Outcomes measured included 1) quantity and distribution of pain calls throughout the hospital, 2) response time and duration of intervention, 3) impact on staff satisfaction, 4) PMRN satisfaction with orientation, and 5) overall care of the APS patients. These outcomes will be described in the presentation.

Interpretation/Conclusion:
Outcomes demonstrated that experienced staff nurses were able to follow CNS pain management protocols after completing an extensive, structured educational program. Within staffing and budget constraints, this program expanded the impact of the CNS role through staff nurse development, resulted in growth opportunities for experienced staff nurses, and improved staff and patient satisfaction.

Implications for Practice:
CNSs can improve pain management through effectively educating staff nurses in complex skills and decision-making. By working creatively with both the medical and administrative teams, CNSs can develop alternative staffing models to improve patient and staff satisfaction.