Using a STP to Manage Anxious, Aggressive Emergency Patients – Longitudinal Assessment

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BACKGROUND

Increasing volume of behavioral health (BH) patients requiring emergency care
Complications of their care led to ...
• Long times to initial physician evaluation with medication ordered (40+ minutes after arrival)
• Many patients progressed to “Code Gray” (significant aggression or violence)
• Others required restraints before medication was administered or took effect
• Multiple BH patients arriving close together magnified problems with care delivery since agitated patients often incited others to agitation

SIGNIFICANCE

• Need for speedy assessment and administration of medication
• Evidence sought from review of literature, multidisciplinary team brainstorming

STP DEVELOPMENT & STAFF TRAINING

• Anxiety/Agitation Scale (AAS) - measures range of behaviors from mild to severe anxiety or agitation
• Determined behavioral thresholds on AAS for medications
• Tested with emergency nurses - interrater reliabilities .90+
• Approvals from hospital committees
• After approval, forms developed
• Staff education

METHODS

• Quality improvement project
• Goals - to improve timeliness of care for BH patients and secondarily, to reduce acts of aggression (Code Grays), use of restraints, staff injuries related to patient aggression
• STP implementation early 2015

RESULTS AND OUTCOMES

Medication administration congruence with STP guidelines
• 10 chart audits monthly in 2018
• 100% compliance
Use of restraints decreased from 2014 (average 9% of BH patients seen in ECC) to 2016 (< 5%) to 2018 (< 2.5%)
Average time in restraints decreased from 286 min (2014) to < 240 min (2016) to < 200 min (2018)

WHAT IS A STANDARDIZED TREATMENT PROTOCOL OR STP?

Legally sanctioned processes that allow RNs to “perform functions which would otherwise be considered the practice of medicine” (California Code of Regulations 1470)
...developed collaboratively within an organization (CA Board of Registered Nursing)
...explicit description of who can use STP including experience, including training/education, (CCR 1470)
Rigorous monitoring required to ensure compliance (CCR 1470)

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

• Use of STPs can improve patient care and safety in areas such as busy emergency care centers

CONCLUSIONS / DISCUSSION

• Use of the new STP improved timeliness of care for BH patients as well as reduced use of restraints in these patients
• While not measured in this project, these changes likely increased provider satisfaction with care delivery