

COPING SCALE FOR ASSESSING LABOR PAIN

Monnie Reba Efross, RN, MSN, LCCE; Ocean Berg, RN, MSN, CNS
SFGH Medical Center
monniereba@sbcglobal.net

Purpose and Pico Question

The purpose of this project is to introduce a coping scale with suggested interventions instead of a pain scale, for RNs on our labor and delivery unit. We are hypothesizing that this will be a more effective tool to assess how a woman is coping with labor pain and to intervene to decrease suffering in labor. Use of this tool could result in greater satisfaction for the RN's. Our Pico question is: In a population of laboring women does use of a coping scale rather than a pain scale lead to RN satisfaction with how they assess and intervene with women experiencing labor pain and lead to increased compliance with documenting assessment of pain/coping?

Background

Women in labor do not consider pain relief as a major criteria for satisfaction with childbirth. They do rate personal control or coping as a major component. Medical interventions seek to eliminate physical pain but laboring women may want a decrease in suffering rather than pain elimination. A coping scale could more accurately reflect the level of suffering and provide the most appropriate interventions to decrease suffering. The Labor and Delivery nurses at our hospital and in other hospitals have expressed dissatisfaction with the pain scale as an assessment tool for laboring women. It has been noted to have limited value in guiding RN implementation of appropriate interventions to reduce patient suffering. A pre test of change survey at SFGH revealed that many of the RN's were dissatisfied with the 0-10 pain scale and were interested in a new tool.

Methods

Pre intervention survey about the use of the 0-10 pain scale by RNs in Labor and Delivery
Pre intervention chart audit for RN frequency of use of pain scale
Adapting of a coping scale for assessing labor pain and suffering with suggested interventions
Presenting the coping scale to the Hospital Pain Committee
Educating the nursing staff using the following:

- Didactic presentations for the nurses about use of the scale.
- Posters of the scale for labor rooms and laminated ring card for all nurses.
- Bulletin board on the unit featuring the coping scale.

Post intervention satisfaction survey of RNs about their use of the coping scale.
Post intervention chart audit for RN frequency of use of coping scale during July 2009

Results

A Post test of change survey to the RN's on their use of the coping scale and a Post test audit of nursing documentation in patient charts were used to determine our results.

Conclusion

Based on the interest expressed by the RN's this innovation should continue, however the tool needs to be modified to address RN feedback. The scale needs to be simplified and the concept

of coping communicated in a manner that is easily accessible to our culturally diverse population. Challenges included introducing this intervention during a stressful time on our unit and the need for more clarification of the concept of coping so that it can be assessed comfortably by the RN staff. Our major success was the continued interest by the RNs to use a tool to replace the pain scale. Based on the interest expressed by the head of the Hospital Pain Committee we are considering creating a research project using this tool, the results of which would be shared with other inpatient units . If modification of the tool results in more RN use of the tool in their documentation these results would be shared with other units and also with other Labor and Delivery units around the country.

Selected References

- Gulliver, B.G., Fisher, J., Roberts, L. (2008).” A New way to assess pain in laboring women”. *Nurs Womens Health*, 12(5): 405-8.
- Hodnett, E. (2002). “Pain and women’s satisfaction with the experience of childbirth: A systematic review.” *Am J Obstet Gynecol*, 186(5): s160-172.
- Mackey, M.C., Tavakoli, A.S. (2004) “ Factors related to childbirth satisfaction.” *J Adv Nsg*, 46(2): 212-219.

Key words: labor pain, childbirth satisfaction, coping assessment, coping with labor