

IMPROVING RECOGNITION AND DOCUMENTATION OF ADVERSE TRANSFUSION REACTIONS

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PURPOSE/AIM/RESEARCH QUESTION: The purpose of this project is to answer the question, in a population of critically ill adults; can an evidence-based education program improve the recognition and documentation of adverse transfusion reactions?

BACKGROUND: A blood utilization audit was conducted at a suburban community hospital. The findings and recommendations specific to nursing included 1) increasing awareness and education, 2) improving documentation, 3) periodic skills-based testing of blood administration and a documented adverse transfusion reaction rate of 0.41%, well below the national average of 2%. A review of the literature on blood component administration and adverse transfusion reaction education and documentation revealed five studies pertinent to the question of improving nurses' documentation of blood administration through education programs. Methods included competency assessment tools, simulated patients, integrated care pathways, and standard operating procedures displayed in clinical areas. Based on the review, an education program utilizing a variety of methods to improve recognition and documentation of transfusion reactions was designed.

METHODS: Pre-program survey of nurses' education, experience and knowledge surrounding blood administration practices and risks was conducted. The program consisted of a PowerPoint presentation, corresponding slide handouts, posters in high traffic clinical areas reviewing key points of the presentation and reminder cards of safe transfusion practices posted on the blood administration tubing supply bins. In addition to comparison of quarterly reports on ten indicators of blood administration and on adverse transfusion rates, a post-program assessment of nurses' experiences and knowledge will be compared with pre-program results.

RESULTS: 70 nurses of a possible 229 answered the survey. Results were similar to the audit in that at least two thirds perceived a relatively low risk to blood component transfusion.

DISCUSSION: The prospect of increasing knowledge and improving care may have motivated some nurses to complete the survey, attend the education program, and review the handouts. The inability to provide tangible rewards of increased work time saved, and possible increase in workload due to additional documentation of transfusion reactions may have decreased attendance and survey response. Length of years in nursing may have deterred some nurses from perceiving a need to change practice.

IMPLICATIONS/CONCLUSIONS: Pertinent reports on blood component administration in quarter 2, the baseline assessment, will be compared with quarter 4, the post-intervention period, and the results, implications and further interventions will be disseminated within the system.

KEY WORDS: transfusion reactions, documentation; transfusion reactions, education.