Facilitating Telephone Communication Between Patients and Family in PACU (Post Anesthetic Care Unit)

University Health Network

Toronto General Hospital  Toronto Western Hospital  Princess Margaret Hospital

Beverly Paulino, R.N.
Pauline Creary, R.N.
Introduction

Communication: *noun*

communication \(kə-ˌmyü-nə-ˈkā-shən\)

the act or process of using words, sounds, signs, or behaviors to express or exchange information or to express your ideas, thoughts, feelings, etc., to someone else
Communication is at the core of Patient Centered Care.
Literature review reveals communication between visitors and patients in the PACU has proved to have a positive effect.

Studies show visitation in PACU

- enhances communication
- decreases anxiety
- improves patient & family satisfaction
“…Part of the recovery is communicating with our families…”
PACU visitation is recommended by OPANA (Ontario PeriAnesthesia Nurses’ Association)

- decreases anxiety
- promotes patient & family centered care

Best practice also supports family visitation in PACU.
Presently PACU supports visits for patients with

- extended lengths of stay
- developmental delay
- unique care requirements necessitating family presence & support
- extreme anxiety
Challenges in PACU at TWH

- distance & location from family surgical waiting room
- no public access through doors (entry to area controlled by I.D. badge reader)
- maintenance of patients’ confidentiality & privacy
- tight layout of PACU (lack of physical space)
Can we do better?
Research Proposal

• to determine the effect of patients’ use of the telephone to communicate with their family while they are admitted in PACU
• quality improvement project
• 30 participants will be recruited, which includes the corresponding family member with whom the patient will connect, and the PACU nurses.
additional telephones were installed between the bays for this initiative
There are no studies or literature related to the use of the telephone as a means of communication between the PACU patient and their family member.

The goal of this project is to determine whether or not the telephone may be a feasible alternative solution to family visitation in PACU or other areas with similar challenges.
Outline of Activity

• inclusion criteria: Elective, post operative orthopedic joint replacement with regional anaesthetic (spinal/peripheral nerve blocks), admitted in-patients (9A or 9B)

• patient consent was obtained prior to the telephone call for follow-up interviews
• 2 hospital volunteers were recruited to facilitate patient contact with their family or friend during their stay in PACU.

• Volunteers offered to connect the patient with their family member by calling their personal cellphone or the phone located at the desk in the surgical waiting room.
• accurate records of participant’s names & phone numbers will be recorded in a log book by the volunteer for follow-up interviews
• interviews were conducted by investigator to assess the effectiveness of telephone communication in the PACU.
• narrative responses from participants elicited by questionnaire was collected by interviewer.
• sample questions included were:
  • did you find phone call helpful? beneficial? recommend it? why? why not?
• data was compiled, reviewed and evaluated.
Benefits

• facilitate & enhance communication between patients and their family members immediately post-op while still recovering in PACU

• contribute to patient centered care

• improve our patient/family communication techniques
- decrease patient & family anxiety
- increase patient & family satisfaction
Surgical Procedures

The chart shows the number of patients who underwent TKA (Total Knee Arthroplasty) and THA (Total Hip Arthroplasty).

- TKA: 10 patients
- THA: 14 patients
### Call successful rates in patients and family members

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Successful Rate (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Patients</td>
<td>66.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family members</td>
<td>91.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Did you find the telephone call helpful?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Positive response rate (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Patients</td>
<td>87.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurses</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Why patient’s think the telephone call is helpful?

![Bar chart showing reasons for calling patients helpful]

- Reassured
- Decreased Anxiety
- Nice to Speak with Family
- Decreased Concern
- Connected
- Happy/Surprised
- Valuable
Why do family members think the telephone call is helpful?

- Reassured
- Decreased Anxiety
- Nice to Speak with Family
- Decreased Concern
- Connected
- Informed

Percentage (%)

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Why do nurses think the telephone call is helpful?

- Decreased Anxiety
- Ensures patient and family
- Patients more relaxed
- With volunteers
- Functional phones

Percentage (%)
Would you recommend this type of communication?

<table>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Why Patients considered it is beneficial?

Percentage (%)

- Reassure family
- Connected
- Happy/relax
- Valuable
Why Family considered it’s beneficial?

- Reassurance
- Decrease concern
- Informed

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Why nurses considered it’s beneficial?

- Increase communication: 30.0%
- Decrease anxiety: 30.0%
- Depends on the situation: 60.0%
What else to improve from Patient’s point of view?

- Continue Telephone communication
- Inform patients about program
- Wifi/ Skype/ Facetime

Percentage (%)
What else to improve from Family’s point of view?

- Volunteers
- Continue Tel Comm program
- Facetime/Technology

Percentage (%)

[Graph showing percentages for each category]
What else to improve from Nurse’s point of view?

- Inform patients prior
- Continue tel comm
- Designated PACU volunteer
- Different technology
Feedback from patients

- Decrease anxiety
- Feel connected
- Good experience
- Happy
- Thankful
Feedback from Patients

• “Thank you for calling my husband. It was great to hear his voice. It was a connection that I needed right after surgery.”

• “Allowing patients to talk with their family members is necessary, and I am glad things are changing.”

• “It was nice to talk with my family right away after surgery.”
Feedback from Patients

• “Thank you for calling my husband. It was great to hear his voice. It was a connection I needed right after surgery.”

• “My family hearing me have a strong voice gives them reassurance. And also because my husband is such a worry wart!”
Feedback from Families

• “Families need to hear from their family members having surgery, to know they are okay. The doctor says everything went well, but hearing her talk was a relief.”

• “…We appreciate the call so much! When family cannot be there, it’s nice to know they are okay.”
Feedback from Families

• “Thank you so much for calling me. I was so worried, and now I can relax, because I know my daughter is good.”

• “Hearing that my mom was okay after surgery was so nice.”

• “Hearing my wife’s voice was a relief! I was so worried!”
Feedback from Nurses

• “I can see that patients are more relaxed, with decreased anxiety after the call.”

• “Having an informed volunteer who knows our PACU dynamics, can make phone calls for our patients, and can help improve the communication between patients and families.”
Feedback from Nurses

• “Telephone communication is not beneficial to all patients, it depends on the individual, and case by case.”

• “Use different technology to communicate with patients and families.”
“Attitudes have changed... The old school of thought was that families were kept separate from patients. And I am happy that families are now being included in the hospital process. Good job to Toronto Western Hospital! Thank you!”
We would like to acknowledge and thank the Krembil Nursing Awards Committee for the opportunity and their generous financial assistance to carry out our research project.

We would also like to recognize the following people for facilitating the development of our research proposal, their ongoing support and commitment to seeing us through this project.
Acknowledgements

Sylvia Blanchard
Delia Doodram
Irene Bancel
Sandra Li James
Helen Kelly
Cora Bagoisan
PACU Staff
Cathy Kuch
Volunteers Paul and Amad