MONITORING FOR RESPIRATORY COMPROMISE:

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Summary

The Joint Commission’s Sentinel Event Alert 449, “Safe use of opioids in hospitals”, cautioned that “epidural analgesia may be associated with adverse events, the most serious of which being respiratory depression, which is generally preceded by sedation”. Of the epidural analgesia drug events - including deaths - that occurred in hospitals and were reported to the Joint Commission’s Sentinel Event database (2004-2011), 23% were related to improper monitoring of the patient.

To evaluate the effectiveness of current clinical practices in monitoring patients during epidural administration, researchers performed an electronic survey of nurses to assess their use of spirometry and other respiratory monitoring practices.

A total of 1714 nurses participated in the survey, which was conducted in October 2013. The survey included questions about their current monitoring practices and any barriers they faced.

The results showed that while most nurses reported using spirometry and other respiratory monitoring tools, there was a need for improvement in the use of these tools, particularly among nurses in the operating room and emergency departments.

Reducing the Risks of Respiratory Compromise

To reduce the risks of respiratory compromise, a number of nurses agreed on the importance of regular monitoring of vital signs, including respiratory rate, and the need for nurses to receive proper training in respiratory monitoring.

Patient Monitoring Priorities

Nursing Wants

These Patients Should be Continuously Monitored

- postoperative patients - 87.7%
- patients with reduced level of consciousness - 64.9%
- restrictive lung disease - 83.6%
- patients receiving opioids or other central nervous system depressants - 78.1%
- patients with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease - 77.2%

Desired Advances in Patient Monitoring

Nurses expressed a desire for more advanced technology, including real-time monitoring and automated alerts, to help them identify respiratory distress earlier.

Future Survey & Research

- Develop a survey tool to capture larger sample sizes
- Refine survey questions to focus on continuous electronic monitoring
- Add new survey questions to gather perceptions on what changes should be focused on in the future

Respiratory Compromise

"Respiratory Compromise" is defined as a "state in which there is a high likelihood of disconnection into respiratory insufficiency, respiratory failure, or death, in which specific interventions (enhanced monitoring and/or therapies) might prevent or mitigate disconnection."

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Respondents with &quot;Respiratory Compromise&quot; Defined</th>
<th>97.3%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Survey Respondents who agree with &quot;Respiratory Compromise&quot; definition</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
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