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Pulmonary Arterial Hypertension (PAH) Unit Based Education Program

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Background: The TMU is a 32 bed progressive care unit that specializes in pulmonary disease management. PAH patients who require inhaled and intravenous prostacyclins are co-horted on this unit within the organization for continuity and safety. Cohesive care is provided by a team of charge nurses, bedside nurse, Nurse Practitioners, Doctors, pharmacists, and care coordinators. After years of caring for PAH patients the TMU transitioned to an educational program for all nursing staff on the unit.

Methods: Nursing recognized a knowledge deficit regarding PAH patients and a need for an educational program on the TMU. Initial education class for nurses new to the TMU, encompasses disease pathology, understanding how to care and manage for a PAH patient, demonstrating how to properly administer medication, pharmacodynamic/kinetic of intravenous/inhaled prostacyclins, correcting Central Venous Catheter (CVC) and infusion pump complications. All participants are required to demonstrate competencies taught in the educational program. Resources for nurses include 24-hour access to PAH interdisciplinary team, organizational care management guidelines (CMG), and a resource binder that remains at the patient's bedside throughout their inpatient stay. After the initial education program is completed, nurses are required to attend a mandatory annual competency testing to ensure adequate knowledge and skills for PAH management and care.

Results: A survey was completed by a sample of TMU nurses to identify years of RN experience, number of years specialized in PAH, the amount of PAH patients cared for, comfort level, and if the program provided an adequate amount of education to care for this complex population. The survey results showed, since the initiation of the PAH education program 85% of TMU nurses surveyed felt education was adequate and rated their comfort level high in caring for this population. A literature review was completed with the search terms "pulmonary hypertension education", "PAH education programs", "PAH nurse education" on OVID, google scholar, Wilmington University library database, and WGU library database. This literature search resulted in only one article fitting the search terms and it was focused on PAH pathology/diagnosis/disease staging for physicians.

Conclusions: TMU has successfully implemented a PAH specific educational program that promotes nursing knowledge and patient safety. TMU increases awareness and specialized management with specific education for nurses new to the TMU, and with annual competency testing. Increasing the quality of care provided to PAH patients.



Figure 1.



Pulmonary Hypertension (PAH) Unit Based Education Program





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Purpose

A collaborative approach to the education of nurses within the Transitional Medical Unit (TMU) on the care of PAH patients. The goal is to keep education current and increase the knowledge/comfort level for nurses caring for this population of patients. This is all done with an overall goal of increased patient safety of the PAH patient population.





Methods

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