Enriching Perioperative Communication Through Family Texting

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Background
- Surgery produces anxiety for patients and their family/support person (Dippre et al., 2022).
- The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated anxiety with regulations limiting visitor presence in the perianesthesia area.

Problem
- Limited communication between the perianesthesia staff and families and/or support person during surgical procedure increased anxiety.

Setting
- A 171-bed community hospital in the northeast United States completing over 11,750 surgeries per year.

Project Objective
- To implement one-way communication utilizing existing technology (Short Message Service [SMS]) available in the health record to alleviate patient, family and/or support person anxiety.

Implementation Process

Patient & Family Support Education

Patient Satisfaction Survey Results
- Pre/post perioperative patient satisfaction scores consistently exceed national benchmarks
- Since implementation of family texting, there has been an increase in the number of positive comments on the patient satisfaction surveys:
  - “The new family texting is a wonderful feature and kept my very anxious family at ease.”
  - “The text messages were a great comfort to my family.”
  - “My family was very pleased with the family texting as they could not be at the hospital due to COVID”
  - “I did not have anyone wait for me. I did like the texting updates to my family member”

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Statement of Successful Practice
- Since August 2020, family texting has been successfully implemented with an enrollment rate of 85% or higher.
- As a result, there has been a decrease in phone calls from families/support person to the perianesthesia unit, leading to increased unit efficiency and increased time for the nurse at the patient’s bedside.
- Anecdotal feedback from patients and support person, as well as results from patient satisfaction surveys, has shown that concerns related to surgery has been reduced.

Implications for Advancing the Practice of Perianesthesia Nursing
- Family texting can be an effective component of perianesthesia communication between clinical nurses and families/support persons.
- Perianesthesia nurses are essential drivers of development and implementation of innovative technologies to improve care for patients as well as their families and/or support person.