

**Title:** Safe Transfers: Improving Hand-off Communication between OR and PACU Nurses

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**Purpose and Rationale:** The purpose of this presentation is to discuss the ineffectiveness of the current hand-off process due to the lack of a standardized operating room (OR) to post anesthesia care unit (PACU) hand-off communication tool.

A need to improve the quality of hand-off communication between OR RN circulators and PACU RNs was identified as information shared in the hand-off varied per the individual reporter. Although OR RN circulators tended to report similar information, no standard format was in place to assure PACU RN were receiving pertinent patient information. Additionally, it was likely that some of the communicated information was not actually relevant and therefore was an inefficient use of time. In order to develop a standard hand-off tool, it was necessary to establish what information should be included.

**Research Questions:**

1. “How helpful is each component of the current report?” (procedure description, allergies, ASA class and precaution status and anticipated time of arrival to PACU/ICU)
2. “What is the information that will better prepare the nurse receiving the patient?”

**Synthesis of Literature Review:** The topic of handoffs for medical and surgical units has been investigated extensively. However, communication problems still exist. Incomplete transfer of information has contributed to 43% of malpractice claims being associated with handoffs. An integrated review of the literature indicates that information completeness is improved when structured formats and a combination of written and verbal reports are used. The literature also revealed that effective perioperative hand-off communication improved patient safety, expedited patient evaluations and interventions and decreased adverse events.

**Methods and Procedures:** A survey was administered to OR and PACU RNs using a paper tool to evaluate relevant elements to discuss during hand-off report.

**Results:** Data collection is in progress.

**Discussion/ Application to Practice:** Improving the quality of the hand-off communication between OR RN circulators and PACU RNs is essential to patient safety and promotes a safe perioperative environment. A standardized format decreases variables and eliminates waste created by the current process. Efficient and effective perioperative hand-off communication improves patient safety, expedites patient evaluations and interventions and decreased adverse events.