Post-anesthesia Care Unit Rotation  
Goals and Objectives  

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Introduction

This rotation strives to provide an environment that promotes the acquisition of the knowledge, skills, clinical judgment, and attitudes essential for management of surgical patients in the postanesthesia care unit (PACU).

In addition to clinical skills, this rotation will emphasize interpersonal skills, effective communication, and professionalism. This program will work toward ensuring that residents, by the time they finish the rotation, assume responsibility and act responsibly and with integrity; demonstrate a commitment to excellence and the ethical principles of clinical care including management of postsurgical and anesthetic complications, assessing readiness for discharge and patient counseling. The residents are also expected to work effectively as a member of a healthcare team.

Resident Responsibilities

- The resident is expected to be available starting at 7 am so that in the event of urgent clinical needs they could be of help.
- The resident is expected to utilize the morning prior to arrival of PACU patients for reading.
- The resident is expected to coordinate with the nursing team to manage the patients while they remain in PACU including 8 West.
- The resident should remain in close communication with the primary team should unexpected developments occur while the patient is in the PACU. The primary anesthesia attending for the patient will be the immediate back up if needed, the Clinical Director for the day will be the secondary back up.
- Depending on the daily schedule, the resident on PACU will be expected to carry the code pager and coordinate with the attending for emergency airway management.

Goals

- Understand relevant discharge criteria
- Understand the evaluation and management of common immediate post anesthesia conditions and complications including:
  - Airway management
  - Pulmonary complications (e.g., hypoxemia, hypercarbia, atelectasis, aspiration)
  - Cardiac dysrhythmias and hemodynamic instability
  - Nausea and vomiting
  - Hypothermia
  - Hemorrhage
  - Altered mental status and delayed emergence
- Understand key issues regarding postoperative pain management and use of multi modal approach to pain management including patient-controlled analgesia (PCAs), epidural infusions and peripheral neural blockade
- Understand normal response to surgery and emergence from anesthesia including management of ambulatory surgical patients.
- Understand strategies for cost-effective patient management in the PACU
Objectives (Based on ACGME competencies)

- **Patient Care**
  - Use of clinical skills of interviewing and physical examination to perform a thorough post-operative assessment of patient in the PACU
  - Effectively use consultant services from different specialties to mitigate post-operative complications
  - Efficiently uses laboratory, radiologic and other studies
  - Perform postoperative assessments on patients with complex co-morbidities and discusses plan with attending physician.
  - The resident will demonstrate good judgment in the care of the post anesthesia patient by understanding when, how and who to call for help in dealing with post anesthesia complications
  - Demonstrate the ability to perform a thorough examination of the patient to determine the cause of immediate post anesthesia or post-surgical complications; the resident will demonstrate appropriate care and compassion for patients in the PACU.

- **Medical Knowledge**
  - Understand post-op complications including airway obstruction, stridor, laryngeal spasm, hypoxia, hypoventilation, pneumothorax, pulmonary embolism, hypovolemia, cardiac arrhythmias, cardiac arrest, incomplete reversal of muscle relaxants, over dose of narcotic analgesics, post-operative nausea and vomiting, hypothermia, hypo and hyperglycemia, anaphylaxis, emergence delirium and prolonged recovery
  - Understanding the principles of acute pain management and be able to act appropriately to care for the needs of patients experiencing acute severe pain after surgery
  - Understand the principles of managing post-operative nausea and vomiting

- **Practice Based Learning and Improvement**
  - Understand the value of post-operative care from the perspective of the patient and their family, health care providers and the hospital
  - Identify own learning deficits, develop a learning plan and carry it out
  - Respond appropriately to constructive feedback
  - Demonstrate ability to effectively search for literature with emphasis on acute pain management and PONV
  - Analyze own practice and determine ways in which you can improve your comprehensive anesthetic plan
  - Transferring knowledge about acute pain to other members of the healthcare team (medical students, ancillary care personal and nursing staff)

- **Interpersonal and Communication Skills**
  - Working as a member of a patient care team including other physicians, nurses, other health care professionals, social workers, and volunteers
  - Obtaining an accurate patient history appropriate in order to provide care to the post-operative patient
  - Completing an informative post-op evaluation on PACU patients
  - Communicating skillfully with patients and family members
  - Communicating information about anesthetic procedures effectively with other colleagues including referring physicians, nurses, and workers on ancillary services
• Professionalism
  o Awareness and management of his/her own values and attitudes, which might interfere with appropriate patient care specific to management of post-surgical patients
  o Management of issues that relate to socio-cultural aspects of family life, and social adjustment related to ethnicity, religion, culture, gender or sexual preference (receiving to valuing)
  o Mutual respect, honesty and integrity for others in all professional activities. Learning the importance of professional, collaborative interactions with all members of the post anesthesia care team including nursing staff, surgeons and fellow anesthesiologists.
  o Exemplifying compassionate and appropriate patient care and demonstration of respect and empathy for the emotional needs of patients

• System Based Practice
  o Work in inter-professional teams to increase patient safety and quality of care
  o Coordinate patient care with nursing team, primary anesthesia team and the surgical team in the setting of PACU
  o Understanding their role as a patient care advocate
  o Becoming familiar with the costs associated with the delivery of anesthesia care
  o Working toward developing team building skills

Author: