Addressing Anxiety in the Pediatric Cardiac Transplant Population

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Background

- Most common anxiety symptoms in children awaiting transplant are distress, fear, behavioral issues, depression, phobia and adjustment disorders.
- Untreated anxiety can directly impact health related outcomes.

Purpose

PICO- In the pediatric heart transplant population of patients aged 10-17, who deal with pre-and post-surgical anxiety, what is the effect of implementing an educational tool kit for nurses caring for those patients.

Aim- To improve nurse's learning about emotional health to respond to symptoms of acute emotional distress and to compare anxiety scores of patients pre-and post intervention for the nursing staff.

Methodology

Design- Quantitative data gathered using GAD-7 anxiety tool along with a nursing needs assessment of knowledge and comfort level. Data was gathered both pre- and post surgery and intervention.

Setting- Cardiac progressive ICU, Cardiac Progressive step-down unit and outpatient Heart Institute.

Sample- Pediatric cardiac transplant patients both pre-and post-operation, CV ICU nurses and CPU nurses.

Intervention

Results

- Education was presented to 64 bedside nurses during unit huddles
- Positive feedback received from all staff
- GAD-7 was administered to 10 pre-operative/pre-education patients.
- 60% of patients scored high pre-op
- GAD-7 was administered to 3 post-operative/post-education patients.
- 10% of patients scored high post-op

Recommendations

 Continue with Psychosocial assessments for all transplant patients

 Continue to promote learning on use of the C.A.R.E. Model

 Include all medically compromised diagnoses for future research on pediatric anxiety

Conclusion

- Improved knowledge increases changes in caregiver attitudes.
- A clear, defined conclusion is not able to be drawn due to a small sample size post-education.
- The C.A.R.E. model can be implemented with every patient encounter.