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EDUCATIONAL UPDATE: USING SIMULATION TO IMPROVE NURSING STAFF CONFIDENCE LEVELS WITH PAEDIATRIC PATIENTS IN THEATRE

C. McCaul¹, C. Coary¹, G. Fitzpatrick¹, K. Bailie¹, S. Marcus²

¹Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children, UK

²Royal Victoria Hospital, Belfast, UK

Introduction and aims

There has been a significant downturn in elective surgery as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. Our paediatric ENT theatres are located within the adult hospital site. Our aim is to assess the impact this has had on the experience of the ENT theatre nursing team and provide a paediatric update in the form of a simulation training session.

Methods

An initial survey was sent out to theatre nursing staff working in ENT theatres. Based on initial results a half-day teaching session was developed. This consisted of a mixture of simulation training and lectures. Teaching was delivered by paediatric anaesthetic consultants and registrars. Four separate paediatric emergency scenarios were run in the theatre and recovery settings which covered scenarios including difficult intubation, malignant hyperthermia and tonsillar haemorrhage. A post course survey was then completed to gain feedback on the course.

Results

14 respondents completed the pre-course survey and 23 completed the post course survey. 79% of nursing staff either agreed or strongly agreed that their time in paediatric theatres has been reduced as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, with only 14% having experienced any form of paediatric teaching within the last 12 months. In the pre-course survey 57% either agreed or strongly agreed that they felt confident when paediatric patients come to theatre. Post-course this improved to 96%. In the post course survey, there was an overall trend of increased confidence levels reported with each of the paediatric emergencies covered in the scenarios when compared to the pre course survey. When asked about confidence levels in selecting the appropriate size of anaesthetic equipment there was an increase in the number of people selecting the two highest variables – extremely confident and very confident. Feedback from the course was encouraging and 100% of participants found the course useful.

Discussion and conclusion

Our survey indicates a significant reduction in exposure to paediatric cases for the nursing staff working in our ENT theatres. The Royal College of Anaesthetists Guidelines for the Provision of Paediatric Anaesthesia Services 2022 highlights the unique challenges posed by paediatric patients.(1)

We have demonstrated that a paediatric based simulation training session can improve confidence levels of nursing staff caring for paediatric patients in theatre. We have also demonstrated an overall trend of improved confidence levels with certain paediatric emergencies. Feedback from the course was overwhelming positive with requests for further scenarios to be covered in future sessions. Given this positive feedback we hope to run this as regular multi-disciplinary teaching session.

Reference

1. Royal College of Anaesthetists. Guidelines for the Provision of Paediatric Anaesthesia Services: Guidelines for the Provision of Anaesthesia Services (GPAS); 2020. Available from: <https://www.rcoa.ac.uk/sites/default/files/documents/2020-02/GPAS-2020-10-PAEDIATRICS.pdf>