

Background

Delirium is a clinically significant issue in the acute care environment, and is particularly common in critical care units. Delirium is noted by acute changes in brain function. Nurses play a critical role in the assessment of delirium and administration of analgesia and sedation in the critical care environment. Thus, improving practice is a key mechanism for improving delirium care.

Local Problem

At the care site, there is a lack of in person education about delirium for novice nurses and no opportunity to practice use of assessment tools.

Methods

This was a Quality Improvement (QI) project focused on the Richmond Agitation Sedation Scale (RASS) as a foundational element of delirium assessment, using multimodal education intervention. Novice critical care nurses (NCCN) attended “Back to Basics” (BTB); an overview of delirium, opportunity to practice assessment skills, utilizing a pre and post test. Following education, nurses were validated using the RASS.

Results

Pre/post test revealed no significant change, indicating students had a high degree of knowledge prior to attending.

Prior to education RASS accuracy was assessed at 40%; post education accuracy was 100%.

Discussion

Nurses’ accuracy using the RASS has significant implications. There is a need for ongoing QI efforts related to delirium, including practice using assessment tools.

Conclusions

This project will serve as a foundation for future training and skills validation of NCCN. Recommendations include the development of standardized onboarding education including delirium assessment tools.