

Issue

The emergency nurse is increasingly involved in the administration of a variety of medications to adults and children for the purpose of procedural sedation in the emergency department setting.

Procedural sedation involves producing an analgesic and sedative state without loss of consciousness for the patient via the administration of medications for therapeutic, diagnostic and surgical procedures.

The administration of medications by oral, rectal, intranasal, inhalation, intramuscular and intravenous routes for procedural sedation creates a potential increased risk for the patient's safety.

NENA position

NENA believes it is in the scope of practice of an emergency nurse to manage the care of a patient before, during, and after administration of medications for procedural sedation, after appropriate education and training is completed.

NENA believes that each emergency department utilizing procedural sedation must develop policies and procedures:


- Guidelines for use of procedural sedation in emergency, including nurse-patient ratio of one-to-one during and after the procedure
- Procedure for procedural sedation, including physician managing sedation, physician performing procedure, nurse caring for patient and other roles as needed (eg. respiratory therapist) which are clearly defined and developed as a multidisciplinary team.
- Documentation tool for documentation of patient status before, during and after procedure, including discharge criteria
- Criteria for discharge of patient
- Patient/parent discharge information, including observation guidelines post-procedure, resource telephone number, and list of medications administered to the patient
- Protocols for managing potential complications or emergency situations arising from the administration of procedural sedation medications
- Pharmaceutical tools to assist nursing staff for administration of agents for sedation

- Drug profiles, including side effects, adverse effects, complications, reversing effects
- Dosage and weight charts
- Peak actions and duration of actions
- Administration protocols.

NENA believes that emergency nurses caring for patients undergoing procedural sedation should complete a standardized education and practical competency package as developed by the facility. This process would enable the emergency nurse's knowledge, skills, and abilities to care for a patient undergoing procedural sedation to be evaluated.

NENA believes there must be a process for evaluation of both the competency of the nursing care provided, and the overall process of administration of procedural sedation in the emergency department, through quality improvement or risk management initiatives.

Rationale

Procedural sedation in the emergency department can be a safe, therapeutic intervention for adults and children undergoing a variety of procedures. Recognition of the potential risks and complications of procedural sedation, with proactive management of patient care, will ensure the best possible outcomes for patient care before, during and after the procedure. 

References

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- ✧ **John Trickett**, for his leadership as chair of National Trauma Committee over the past three years.
- ✧ **Pat Walsh**, for assuming the chair of National Trauma Committee.
- ✧ **Bev Mullin**, for receiving a community volunteer action award for her work with the foodbank in Halifax, NS.
- ✧ **Johnson & Johnson**, for its wonderful advertising for nurses.

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