



Pain Management in Patient Transport



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AIM:

To determine if patients being transported between two rural hospitals by non-ambulance transport travelling along two predetermined routes experienced pain during their journey. This study was also used to identify if any patient characteristics could be associated with an increase or decrease in the level of pain.

METHODS:

This retrospective comparative study examined the medical records of patient transport patients whom travelled from Cowra and Molong Hospitals to Orange Hospital. The study compared the pain assessment and pain management within the specified dates: July 1st 2014, to 31st December 2015. This study looked at the transport episode in three phases being pre-transport, during transport and post transport.

RESULTS:

Data were examined for a total of 256 trips taken by 150 patients. Of the total trips: 92 travelled from Cowra to Orange and 164 travelled from Molong to Orange. Fifty-six percent (n = 144/256) of patients in the four hours pre-departure and 71% (n = 181/256) of patients during the two hours post arrival did not have a pain score recorded. Pain scores both pre-trip and post-trip were significantly associated with whether pain was recorded on the PTU nurse's handover sheet (pre: p = 0.006; post: p = 0.025).

Of the pre-transport group analgesia was given 56% of the time (n = 143/256) and of the post-transport group it was given 24% (n = 61/256). The type of analgesia administered before departing (pre-transport pain medication group) was significantly associated with the patient's pain scores post-transport (p = 0.013) but not in the pre-transport phase (p = 0.846).

CONCLUSIONS:

This study found the small numbers of patients with pain scores pre and post-transport made it difficult to identify characteristics of patients experiencing pain. It has laid the ground work for a follow-on study of a larger proportion of the 19,000 patients the PTU transports each year. Additional recording of pain scores throughout the transport episode (pre-transport, during transport and post-transport phases) would enhance the scope of the pain assessment for PTU patients.

For the full report on this project visit our website, follow the link to the Rural Research Capacity Building Program and click on 'view completed projects'

Rich graduated in the late eighties from the old apprentice training system at Lithgow hospital. He has been nursing for thirty years now and was the first CNS for the Acute Pain Service at Gosford Hospital. Over the past 17 years Rich has been enjoying the one on one patient contact and travelling around each day in his role with patient transport. In his spare time, he likes helping people find their unclaimed money.

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