

Applying the National Quality Forum Safe Practice 10

- 1 Ask each patient or legal surrogate to recount what he or she has been told during the informed consent discussion

Early Adopter: Shriners Hospital for Children, Los Angeles

1 Population Served:

Limited English Proficiency

Low Literacy

Low Healthcare Literacy

Informed Consent Process

- 1 Patients Seen in Remote Clinic or on-site at hospital initially. Discussion with physician.
- 1 When accepted, appointment scheduled for surgery.
- 1 Evening before surgery, informed consent is obtained. Children 14 years and older participate in the process.
- 1 Documentation is usually a pre-op note. Nurses do not necessarily document the repeat-back response.

Informed Consent

Repeat Back occurs three times:

1. Upon admission to unit as part of assessment process
2. In pre-op area prior to entering O.R.
3. When transferred to O.R. by surgical nurses.

Repeat back has been used for over six years at Shriners Hospital.

Informed Consent—Repeat Back

- 1 Patient response is to acknowledge:
 1. That they have spoken to the physician,
 2. That they understand what is being done (in simple layman terms), and
 3. That they understand alternatives to surgery/treatment (Note: At Shriners Hospital, all procedures are elective).

Informed Consent

- 1 In California, Informed Consent may only be obtained by a licensed physician.
- 1 Initial discussion occurs in clinic setting.
- 1 As noted, signed consent is obtained evening prior to surgery.
- 1 Nurse's role is to verify process, witness.
- 1 Cultural issues—patients often do not ask questions because they do not want to appear stupid or uninformed

Barriers to Informed Consent Process

- 1 Language—limited interpreters for some languages
- 1 Lack of medical knowledge and education leading to an inability to fully comprehend medical condition and surgical/medical procedures involved

Barriers to Informed Consent Process

- 1 Providers are frustrated because the process takes additional time.

Usual practice is to continually repeat what is being done, using lay language, slowing down, allowing more time for understanding by patients and families

Lessons Learned

- 1 Generally, patients simply trust the medical community and are often less interested in the details and more interested in outcomes.
- 1 Patients expectations often exceed actual outcomes, so there are disappointments. Staff must be more careful in explanations and stress realities of limited medical interventions.

Recommendations

- 1 Respect for the patient is key to Informed Consent process
- 1 Allowing time for the necessary education is important
- 1 Increasing patient participation will help improve outcomes because it makes them a partner in the treatment process
- 1 Allow adequate time for patients to express themselves