Bridging the Gap of Pain Management

Gap Analysis for Preventing the Acute-to-Chronic Pain Transition

Use the following scales to assess your knowledge and skills in preventing the transition of acute pain to chronic pain. Help your colleagues perform similar assessments and then apply the strategies in the Tools and Tactics tool to help you address this risk in your patient population.

1. How often do you consider the risk for chronic pain when you are caring for patients with acute pain?
   - [ ] Never
   - [ ] Almost never
   - [ ] Sometimes
   - [ ] Often
   - [ ] Always

Need help getting there?

- Incorporate an evaluation of your patient’s risk for developing chronic pain following this illness into your routine assessment.
- Talk to patients and their families about acute pain transitioning to chronic pain and empower them with strategies to lower this risk.
- Form a team to identify practices on your unit that can mitigate the risk of acute pain transitioning to chronic pain. Include providers, social workers, therapists, and other members of the healthcare team.

Resources:
- Tools and Tactics
- Watch the webinar with your colleagues and discuss the strategies described: Preventing the Acute-to-Chronic Pain Transition
- Review AACN’s Practice Alert, Assessing Pain in the Critically Ill, and the recorded webinar Post Intensive Care Unit Syndrome: ICU Interventions that Matter
2. How consistently do you and your colleagues manage acute pain using a validated pain assessment tool?

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| Never | | | | | | | | | Always

**Need help getting there?**

- Collaborate with your nurse manager, advanced practice nurse, or clinical practice committee to:
  - Determine a tool that will work for your unit and patient population
  - Ask a sample of nurses on your unit to test the tool and provide feedback
  - Identify strategies that might help you incorporate the tool into routine care
- Consider developing a short, case-based presentation to help your colleagues learn how to use a pain assessment tool.
- Include an assessment of the patient’s response to pain management interventions in hand-off of care reports.

**Resources:**

- Tools and Tactics
- Review *The Critical-Care Pain Observation tool (CPOT)* and *the Behavioral Pain Scale (BPS)*, tools included among this webinar’s resources
- Read the article: *Observational Pain Scales in Critically Ill Adults* (Stites M. *Crit Care Nurse*. 2013;33(3):68-78.)
3. How often do you employ nonpharmacologic interventions for pain to augment the benefits of pain medications?

| Never | | | | | | Always |

Need help getting there?
- Post the tool Acute Pain Management Interventions in your unit as a reference for you and your colleagues.
- Select the nonpharmacologic strategy that you feel most comfortable using and that is best suited to your patient population; incorporate it into your plan of care.
- Talk to your patient’s family about how they can assist in employing nonpharmacologic pain strategies, such as by reassuring the patient, bringing in music, and providing massage.

Resources:
- Tools and Tactics
- Review the tool: Acute Pain Management Interventions