

## **Evidenced Based Approach to Visitation in a PACU**

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The philosophy of nursing in the PACU at MDACC is that the family is an extension of the patient and the family. Visitation relieves patient anxiety and promotes healing.

### **Problem**

Patients and families were dissatisfied due to a limited visitation program in the PACU. Some nurses allowed visitation while others strictly followed the limited visitation. The length of stay for patients in the PACU has increased in the past two years due to an increase in the acuity of patients and a decreased availability of inpatient beds.

### **Evidence**

A literature review revealed a limited number of articles pertaining to PACU visitation.

### **Strategy**

A visitation committee was formed including nursing staff, patient volunteers, inpatient service coordinators, and managers.

Barriers were identified by peer interview and by questionnaire.

### **Practice change**

Staff ratio was increased from 3:1 to 2:1.

Overnight Recovery patients' were located next to the main entrance for the convenience of their families and for the privacy of the arriving patients.

Two visitation programs were piloted for a month each. The staff and volunteers were interviewed via the same questionnaire after the pilots.

Physicians were informed of the new visitation programs prior to their initiation.

### **Evaluation**

The questionnaire revealed that 50% of the staff preferred a flexible schedule and 50% preferred scheduled times.

## **Results**

The committee decided to implement a combined visitation policy, which the PACU is currently using.

## **Recommendations**

Visitation in a PACU increases patient and family satisfaction.

## **Bibliography**

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