

TEAMSTEPPS During Codes in the OR: Turning Chaos into Control

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New York Presbyterian Westchester (NYPW) is a suburban community hospital in Bronxville NY. The hospital contains 8 Operating Rooms and performs an average of 370 cases per month which include both inpatient and same day surgery patients.

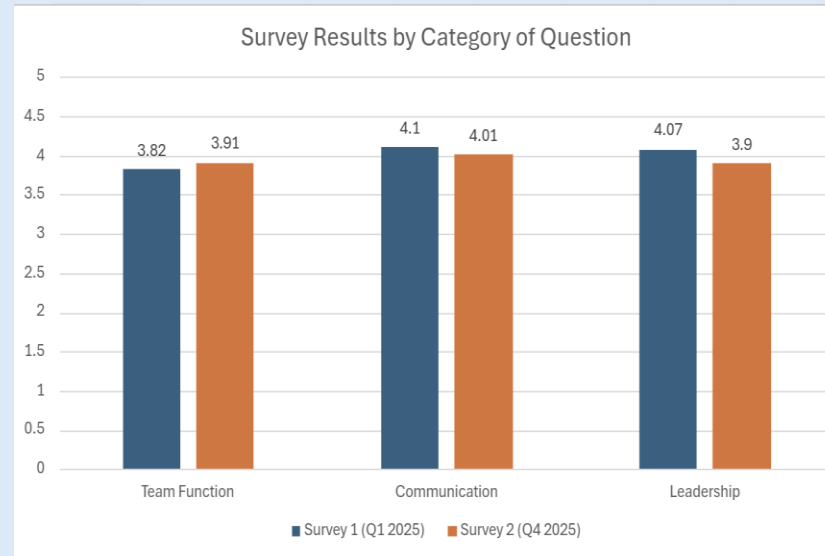
Clinical Issue

Cardiac arrests in the OR represent a rare but life-threatening emergency requiring quick and coordinated intervention. Effective management depends on clear communication, role clarity, adherence to algorithms, and seamless teamwork. Members of the OR team at NYPW, including Nurses, MDs, CRNAs, PAs, ORTs, and PPCAs, participated in the TeamSTEPPS (Strategies and Tools to Enhance Performance and Patient Safety) program to provide the team with a knowledge base to enhance our performance in codes and improve clinical outcomes. TeamSTEPPS is a nationally recognized evidence-based teamwork system designed to improve communication and skills in healthcare.

Nursing Implications

- Effective communication is critical to ensure timely interventions and reduce confusion.
- Clear understanding of individual roles and responsibilities helps promote coordinated and efficient resuscitation efforts.
- Early identification of a designated code leader is essential to guide decision making, give instructions, and maintain situational awareness.

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Pre and post survey questions

Team Function – Staff understands their roles and responsibilities
Communication - Feedback between staff is delivered in a way that promotes positive interactions
Leadership – Staff caution each other about potentially dangerous situations.

References:

[TeamSTEPPS_guide_final.pdf](#)
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jcjq.2022.08.011>

Implementation:

- Education
 - closed loop communication
 - identifying code cart contents
- Conducting post code debriefs to reinforce successful performance and identify areas needing improvement.
- Quarterly code simulations with role assignments and a designated code leader.

Outcome

Survey results show improved team function driven by clearer understanding of roles and responsibilities; however continued focus is needed on strengthening communication and leader designation as some staff members report hesitation to speak up and share concerns.

The challenges in designating a code leader is having enough anesthesia team members available to ensure an Anesthesiologist can step into the code leader role while others maintain clinical support. Anesthesiologists are often occupied with critical tasks (airway management, administering medication, etc.) which can limit their ability to immediately assume the code leader role.

Next steps

- Reinforcing an individual to declare being the code leader
- Providing simulations with multiple disciplines to increase comfort in performing in codes.
- Adding TeamSTEPPS to the unit orientation for all employees.