Recognizing and responding to bedside emergencies

They can't rescue, if they don't recognize……

The Problem/Opportunity

While nurses are responsible for the recognition and immediate response to the acutely decompensating patient, there were no formal educational programs focused specifically on the most common bedside emergencies.

Aim/Goal

Develop and implement a formal program to provide training in bedside emergency response for nurses. The goal was to increase ability for early recognition, immediate assessment requirements and immediate interventions to help prevent cognitive errors.

The Team

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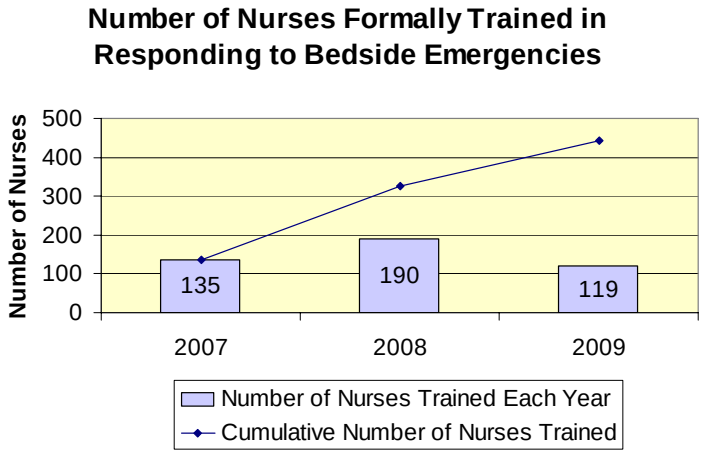
The Interventions

- Conducted Educational Needs Assessment through:
  - review of most common "triggers" on a daily basis
  - informally surveyed staff and administrative supervisors; and
  - validated with post workshop surveys
- Identified the 6 common acute bedside emergencies that our nurses encounter
- Conducted Literature Review, developed curriculum and scenarios for these emergencies in Simulation
- Developed Curriculum for a Bedside Emergencies Training Course that included: **Acute Respiratory Decompensation**, **Acute Cardiac Decompensation Acute Sepsis**, **Acute Mental Status Changes, Acute GI Bleed**, **Acute Onset of Rapid Atrial fibrillation**
- Implemented program

The Results/Progress to Date



Lessons Learned

Nurses most commonly perceive their role in bedside emergencies as:

- The Eyes and Ears of the MD in gathering information
- Early recognition and engagement of the MD for a rapid response
- Responsible for advocating for the patient and communicating situation, background and assessment to the team

Nurses perceived that there are sometimes barriers regarding calling for help during a bedside emergency such as:

- Lack of confidence in their own assessment skills
- Fear of unnecessarily "bothering" the busy physicians

Next Steps/What Should Happen Next

- Further explore RN perceptions of the barriers to calling for help
- Explore additional teaching methods (ie. additional simulation opportunities)
- Develop standardized work toward approaching the assessment of the acutely decompensating patient.
- In 2010 we plan to train additional 65+nurses

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