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“Noise: Its impact in the operating room”

Abstract
Orthopedic and neurologic cases routinely reach noise levels exceeding 120 decibels (Katz, 2014). Modern equipment and monitors used by anesthesia personnel only reach 85 decibels (Katz, 2014). These monitors can go undetected during peak noise levels creating a serious safety concern for patients that could lead to patient injury or death (Gawande, Zinner, Studdert, & Brennan, 2003). A clinical question was developed to determine if the education of noise levels in the operating room affects change in practice. For operating room managers and staff, does education of noise levels in the operating room compared to no education initiate a change in practice?

A review of the literature was conducted with 21 published articles meeting the inclusion criteria. A website was created in order to disseminate information to a larger population. The website can be visited at brennonsloan.wixsite.com/noise. Information gathered from the review of literature was placed on the website. A practice change proposal was presented to a local Level II operating room nurse manager. An evaluation tool was utilized after the practice change proposal. It was determined that the operating room nurse manager would be willing to implement practice change.

The evidence from published literature supports the need for practice change in modern operating rooms. Further research needs to continue along with education of patients and staff. Further research and education can improve safety and decrease miscommunication among staff, ultimately providing a higher level of care to patients.