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Preventable Hospital Deaths Can Be Reduced By Encouraging Error Reporting

Improvements in hospital safety practices begin with the reporting of errors and potential mistakes in the care of patients, said Dana E. Sims, who focused a study on the influence of a learning orientation culture within an organization and trust in leadership on workers' willingness to formally report and document errors. There is no uniform reporting among states in regard to releasing information about mistakes. Accurate reporting of errors depends upon whether organizations encourage, support and follow up the documentation of errors and practices that can harm patients. Also, compiling information relies heavily on front-line employees, nurses and medical staff, being able to report mistakes within a non-threatening culture. (SIOP – April 29, 2010)

More at <http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/187133.php>



Death Rates Not Best Judge of Hospital Quality, Researchers Say

Inpatient mortality rates, used by organizations to issue “report cards” on the quality of individual U.S. hospitals, are a poor gauge of how well hospitals actually perform and should be abandoned in favor of measures that more accurately assess patient harms and the care being provided, argue patient safety experts in a paper out today. Peter Pronovost, M.D., Ph.D., and Richard Lilford, Ph.D., write in the British Medical Journal that hospital mortality rates take into account all inpatient deaths, not just the ones that could have been prevented with quality care. Since many patients are often too sick to be saved by the time they are admitted to the hospital, the researchers argue, hospital mortality rates shouldn’t be the factor that determines whether hospitals are “good” or “bad.” Only one of every 20 hospital deaths in the United States is believed to be preventable. (British Medical Journal – April 20, 2010)

More at http://www.consumeraffairs.com/news04/2010/04/hospital_quality.html

Facing challenges in the OR

While the economy may be stabilizing, the effects of the economic downturn that began in late 2008 are still impacting health care facilities across the country. Tough times have forced OR leaders to make difficult decisions toward improving processes and outcomes at their facilities. While facing these challenges, health care facilities are also trying to stay current with new technologies and are looking ahead at the changes reform will bring. Three interim managers with AORN Works, Inc., who are working in different facilities that vary in size and location, discuss the challenges they are facing and the ways they are working with staff members to develop solutions. (AORN – April 2010)

More at <http://www.aorn.org/News/Managers/April2010Issue/HotTopics>

Women’s Mortality Rates at U.S. Hospitals Differ from Men’s

Women and men experience different outcomes at U.S. hospitals for the same procedures and treatments, according to a new study released today by HealthGrades, the leading independent healthcare ratings organization. The HealthGrades Seventh Annual Women’s Health in American Hospitals study also identified hospitals in the top 5% in women’s care through an analysis of nearly 7 million hospitalization records from all of the nation’s nearly 5,000 nonfederal hospitals. Compared to men, women had a higher risk of mortality in three cardiovascular procedures: valve-replacement surgery (52.8% higher risk), coronary bypass surgery (36.6%), and coronary interventional procedures (19.5%). Women also had a 5.8% higher risk of dying after a stroke. (HealthGrades – April 21, 2010)

More at

http://www.businesswire.com/portal/site/home/permalink/?ndmViewId=news_view&newsId=20100421005271&newsLang=en

Risk of Stroke Associated with Bypass Surgery Technique Designed to Prevent Organ Damage

The standard practice of cooling and then rewarming a patient to prevent organ damage during cardiac bypass surgery may impair the body’s mechanism that controls blood flow to the brain, potentially increasing the patient’s risk of stroke, new research from Johns Hopkins suggests. As many as five percent of cardiac bypass patients, the study finds, wake up from surgery with significant loss of controlled movement or speech caused by an interruption of blood flow to the brain -- a stroke -- but physicians have been unable to explain why. In a report on the observational study, published in the journal *Anesthesia & Analgesia*, the scientists suggest that the culprit could be a breakdown of this blood-flow regulation mechanism. That mechanism seems to fail, they say, as doctors work to restore body temperature to its normal 36 degrees Celsius after cooling it to protect organs and facilitate heart bypass. (*Anesthesia & Analgesia* – April 23, 2010)

More at <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2010/04/100422141154.htm>



GENERAL HEALTHCARE Articles

Study Supports Acupuncture Effects in Pain Control

The scientific validity of traditional Chinese medicine for pain treatment of pain received a nod of support in the May issue of Anesthesia & Analgesia, official journal of the International Anesthesia Research Society (IARS). Dr. Philip Lang and colleagues of the University of Munich used quantitative sensory testing to identify changes in pain sensitivity with acupuncture in 24 healthy volunteers. After applying acupuncture to the leg, the researchers found that pain thresholds increased by up to 50 percent. Effects were noted in both the treated leg and the untreated (contralateral) leg. (Anesthesia & Analgesia – April 30, 2010)
More at <http://www.newswise.com/articles/study-supports-acupuncture-effects-in-pain-control>

Can Laughing Give You a Workout?

Rolling on the floor laughing, giggling until your stomach hurts, guffawing and slapping your knees -- sometimes laughing can feel like a workout. Studies have shown that mirthful laughter, the kind that stems from real joy, relieves stress, lightens mood and confers health benefits. Since the concept of laughing for health surfaced in the 1970s, studies have indicated it can decrease cortisol and epinephrine (the hormones that regulate stress), help reduce blood vessel constriction and boost immune function. One small new study takes that notion further by suggesting laughter could be as beneficial as exercise. But it's facing some skepticism. (CNN – April 28, 2010)
More at <http://www.cnn.com/2010/HEALTH/04/28/laughter.health.benefits/index.html?npt=NP1>

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