



Bedside Safety Huddles to Manage a Complex Obstetric Case

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Perinatal safety is a goal of all obstetric units. How a multidisciplinary team communicates during an emergent or high-risk scenario can affect team functioning and health outcomes (Main et al., 2015). The Joint Commission Center for Transforming Healthcare (2012) identifies miscommunication as a cause in 80% of serious medical errors. In response, health care facilities have worked to implement a number of tools and projects to improve teamwork and standardize communication (Hughes, 2008). One specific method used to enhance team communication is the safety huddle.

About Safety Huddles

A safety huddle is a short briefing designed to give frontline staff and bedside caregivers the opportunity to stay informed and review the background and to plan and coordinate care (Goldenhar, Brady, Sutcliffe, & Muething, 2013; Kacmar, 2016). “The huddle is a team-building tool that increases effective communication among healthcare providers” (Glymph et al., 2015, p. 184). Further, a safety huddle creates the time and space for communication, thus enhancing relationships and a culture of safety (Provost, Lanham, Leykum, McDaniel, & Pugh, 2015). The Institute for Healthcare Improvement (2004) recommends regular, frequent safety huddles.

Abstract: Multidisciplinary communication is essential to safety in health care. Safety huddles offer an opportunity to develop and implement a standardized care plan to improve outcomes. This is especially true for complex obstetric cases. By conducting huddles at the bedside, a health care team can receive useful input from women and their families. This article describes our team’s use of safety huddles in the care of a woman with a complex health history and highlights the benefit of performing safety huddles at the bedside to improve team function and optimize outcomes. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.nwh.2017.04.004>

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