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Topic 1

Promoting Patient Engagement Towards Patient Safety

ROLE OF PATIENTS IN THWARTING SURGICAL SITE INFECTIONS

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Introduction

Surgical Site Infections (SSI) are a significant concern as they can lead to increased patient morbidity, prolonged hospital stays, and higher healthcare costs. In developing countries, knowledge of the importance of hand hygiene, wound care & sanitation among patients and caregivers is lacking. Patient engagement in preventing SSI might be an effective and useful strategy for the already existing surgical site care bundles.

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Suggestions

- Patient & caregiver awareness of risk factors for surgical site infections like blood glucose control, cessation of smoking, pre-operative bath, early mobilization, hand hygiene, sanitation, intra-operative skin disinfection, and appropriate post-operative wound care can be initiated during pre-operative assessment by educators.
- Education pamphlets or videos can be shared with all patients undergoing elective surgeries with the risk factors for SSI and the key role of a patient in reducing SSI in regional languages.
- Infection Control Nurse can give Patient educational sessions daily in all pre and post-operative wards.

Barriers

- Time constraints in pre-operative assessment clinics / OPDs.
- Individual literacy and perception influencing the effectiveness of education.

Facilitators

- Clinical assistants or Educators in pre-operative assessment clinics.
- Surgical ward staff nurses.
- Infection Control Nurses.

Possible Outcomes

- Reduction in the Surgical Site Infection.
- Appropriate Glycemic Control.
- Early post-operative recovery.
- Decrease in the length of stay.
- Decrease in the cost of Treatment

A significant reduction in SSI was evidenced through patient education in our practice.

Conclusion

Patient engagement in elective surgeries through basic education and pragmatic recommendations can be empowered by the surgical team to seek information at a pre-operative stage which gives an equal responsibility for an uneventful surgical journey.

References:

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- *Tartari, E.. et al. Patient engagement with surgical site infection prevention: an expert panel perspective. Antimicrob Resist Infect Control **6**, 45 (2017).*
- *WHO global guidelines for the prevention of surgical site infection Strong guideline recommendations*