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MINIMUM TRAINING REQUIREMENTS FOR THE ANAESTHETIC NURSE

BACKGROUND

The Australian College of PeriAnaesthesia Nurses (ACPAN) is one of the peak nursing bodies in Australia representing anaesthesia care and post-anaesthesia care nurses. For the purposes of this document, the term anaesthetic nurse refers to the dedicated nurse assisting the anaesthetist as outlined in ANZCA PS08.

The peri-anaesthesia domain is a specifically domain including several specialties (acute pain management, hyperbaric medicine, obstetrics) within an a highly complex area, often requiring a multidisciplinary approach that complies with standards and documents relating to anaesthesia care. The presence of a trained assistant for the anaesthetist during the conduct of anaesthesia is a major contributory factor to safe patient management (PS08).

The anaesthetic nurse acts a patient advocate, managing care and immediately medical assistance if required. Additionally, the anaesthetic nurse has a duty of care to provide safe ethical comprehensive patient care at all times within their scope of practice and in line with the relevant Nurse and Midwifery Board of Australia (NMBA) documents.

The anaesthetic nurse has a duty to function in accordance with relevant standards of practice and considers these. Specifically, the following are considered for this document:

- The Australian College of Perioperative Nurses (ACORN) Standards of Perioperative Care 2018
- The Australian New Zealand College of Anaesthetists (ANZCA) professional documents, guidelines.

Facilities can provide a wide variety of services, from dental, cosmetic to trauma and complex transplantations. Patients undergo surgery or procedures that include general anaesthesia, major regional anaesthesia, large dose local anaesthesia and, in some facilities intravenous sedation. Therefore, the anaesthetic nurses' minimum training requirements and core competencies must align with the type of surgery and procedures performed, the complexity of anaesthesia or sedation and patient needs. The purpose of this document is to describe the minimal requirements for the training of an anaesthetic nurse to meet patient care requirements in this environment.

MINIMUM TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

The anaesthetic nurse must have completed a training course, program or education that includes minimum core competencies. Additionally, the anaesthetic nurse must have undertaken a minimum 12 months full time equivalent (FTE) clinical hours working in anaesthesia. The anaesthetic nurse can be a Division 2 Enrolled Nurse, medication endorsed, or Division 1 Registered Nurse. Furthermore, depending on the facility, the anaesthetic nurse may also complete any specific training or education requirements

and other competencies may also need to be considered commensurate with employment requirements. This also considers information as outlined ACORN. Additionally, this refers to the ACPAN professional practice framework and ACPANs level 1, 2 and 3 training requirements for anaesthetic nurses. Where necessary, recognition of prior learning may be assessed and applied commensurate with the requirements outlined in this document.

The anaesthetic nurse shall undergo level 1 training that a minimum includes applied knowledge of:

- Anaesthesia techniques, types and pharmacology
- Anatomy and physiology: airway, respiratory function, cardiovascular function, central nervous system, thermoregulatory system, pain control regulation, nausea and vomiting
- Planning and prioritising care throughout the perioperative environment
- Infection control principles related to the perioperative environment
- Professional and Medico-legal requirements in the perioperative environment
- Knowledge of standards/protocols used within the perioperative environment
- Function and processes related to the perioperative environment
- Environmental management and safety in the perioperative environment
- Pharmacological administration and management
- Evidence Based Practice and research
- Patient Safety and human factors specifically teamwork, situational awareness, cultural competence and communication

MINIMUM CORE COMPETENCIES

COMPETENCY 1: PATIENT ASSESSMENT

1.1 The anaesthetic nurse acts within their scope of practice and uses critical thinking to assess, analyse, plan, implement and evaluate patient care.

1.2 The anaesthetic nurse demonstrates understanding of the underlying pathophysiology related to patient care specifically the surgery/procedure.

1.3 The anaesthetic nurse demonstrates a thorough understanding of anatomy and physiology and possess a prerequisite knowledge of basic sciences.

1.4 The anaesthetic nurse demonstrates an applied understanding of the anaesthesia and surgery/procedure specific to their work environment. At a minimum, this must include:

- Types and techniques of anaesthesia and related complications
- Types of surgery/ procedures and related complications
- Monitoring used to maintain safe patient care
- Anaesthesia related pharmacology
- Wound management and related equipment
- Patient positioning and prevention of pressure injuries
- Underlying patient pathophysiology related to the surgery/ procedure

1.5 The anaesthetic nurse performs a thorough assessment of all body systems including collecting and recording relevant vital signs and overall patient status and will participate in the anaesthetic patient care plan.

COMPETENCY 2: CLINICAL HANDOVER

2.1 The anaesthetic nurse uses an evidence based systematic process to undertake clinical handover and when there is a transfer of patient care. This is in accordance with ANZCA PS53 and PS08.

2.2 The anaesthetic nurse ensures relevant information is communicated as per local policy related to preoperative or preprocedural clinical handover.

COMPETENCY 3: PAIN ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT

3.1 The anaesthetic nurse ensures a systematic process to the assessment and management of pain.

COMPETENCY 4: SPECIAL POPULATIONS

4.1 The anaesthetic nurse demonstrates knowledge and expertise of specific anaesthesia care for special populations (obstetric, paediatric, gerontological, bariatric and cognitively impaired patients)

COMPETENCY 5: EMERGENCY CARE

5.1 The anaesthetic nurse demonstrates applied knowledge in the following:

- Recognition and response to deteriorating patient using a systematic approach relevant to their workplace
- Facilitating family involvement in care of special populations or patients with special needs
- Assessment and evaluation of reversal from neuromuscular blockade

5.2 The anaesthetic nurse manages the following complications per appropriate algorithms:

- Airway obstructions
- Hypotension
- Anaphylaxis
- Local Anaesthetic Toxicity
- VTE/ Deep venous thrombosis (DVT)/ Embolus
- Cardiopulmonary resuscitation, cardiac defibrillation and cardioversion. At least one staff member is competent in Advanced Life Support
- Malignant Hyperthermia

5.3 The Division 1 anaesthetic Registered Nurse is competent in advanced life support (ALS) and if working in a paediatric facility, in paediatric ALS, to be renewed every three years and comply with facility requirements.

COMPETENCY 6: ANAESTHESIA EQUIPMENT AND SAFETY

6.1 The anaesthetic nurse demonstrates applied knowledge, safe use, adequate checking before use, cleaning and servicing of anaesthesia related equipment and consumables.

6.2 The anaesthetic nurse demonstrates applied knowledge of potential hazards and how to reduce them and ensures patient and staff safety in the work environment.

6.3 The anaesthetic nurse demonstrates applied knowledge of the effective use of safety checklists.

RELATED DOCUMENTS:

ANZCA

- PS08 Statement on the Assistant for the Anaesthetist, 2016
- PS09 Guidelines on Sedation and/or Analgesia for Diagnostic and Interventional Medical, Dental or Surgical Procedures, 2014
- PS31 Guidelines on Checking Anaesthesia Delivery Systems
- PS55 Recommendations on Minimum Facilities for Safe Administration of Anaesthesia in Operating Suites and Other Anaesthetising Locations
- PS28 Guidelines on Infection Control in Anaesthesia

ACPAN

- Education Standards, 2018
- Education curriculum for anaesthetic nurse training

ACORN

- Nursing Role, Anaesthetic Nurse, 2018

References

- Immediate post anaesthetic recovery. The Association of Anaesthetists of Great Britain and Ireland, 21 Portland Place, London W1B 1PY. September 2002
- Practical clinical skills assessment checklist ACORN Board Approved: V1: August 2017 Copyright ACORN 2017
- BARNA: Standards of Practice Last Revised October 2012
- IFNA Standards
- Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists (ANZCA). Statement on the Post-Anaesthesia Care Unit. PS04 2018

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