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The development of stroke code activation for inpatient hospital: How to prepare Nurses in action?

Elmer Javier Catangui

King Abdulaziz Medical City, Saudi Arabia

A stroke code activation for in-hospital patients will be introduced at the National Guard Health Affairs (King Abdulaziz Medical City Riyadh, (KAMC), Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in order to address delays of identifying stroke on inpatient wards and communication barriers about the need of urgent medical intervention. Nurses play a significant role in activating a stroke code since they are the first to recognize stroke symptoms in the ward. Prior to the launching of the stroke code activation, developing departmental policies on criteria for stroke code activation and increasing awareness among nurses regarding prompt recognition of stroke symptoms in the ward are therefore imperative.

A stroke code activation pathway protocols for in patients was developed in order to facilitate a rapid process of assessing patient with a suspected stroke and to provide a timely administration of intravenous thrombolysis and thrombectomy treatments. Also, a Stroke Activation session and Fast Session (SAFE), a nursing education initiative was introduced and implemented in October 2017. It is a 30- minute daily protected session for nurses that underpin the following key concepts: a. What is a stroke code activation? b. What are the criteria for

stroke code activation? c. How to recognize stroke symptoms using Face Arm Speech and Time (FAST) tool d. What is thrombolysis and thrombectomy therapy? e. What is the role of a nurse in the stroke code activation? It was facilitated by the nurse specialist and was held at the large auditorium to cater all KAMC nurses.

More than 1500 nurses are adequately trained, prepared and ready to facilitate the stroke code activation. The stroke code activation pathway protocol has been disseminated to all health allied professionals (nurses, physicians, and the multidisciplinary team) to inform the process. To date, a mock stroke code activation is planned to initiate in the units to refresh nurses' and physicians' facilitating and following the stroke thrombolysis pathway.

Education remains to be the cornerstone in preparing nurses in action the inpatient stroke code activation project. It is an exciting learning opportunity for all nurses to get involved in the hyperacute management of stroke care. It is an excellent example of empowering nurses to take into an advanced level of nursing expertise.

e: Catanguiel@ngha.med.sa