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LEEDS CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL DAY CASE TONSILLECTOMY PRACTICE CHANGE

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Background

Paediatric day case tonsillectomy operations are routinely carried out nationwide. In recent years at The Leeds Children's Hospital (LCH) the incidence of complications between 4 and 6 hours post operatively has been audited. This was to see if a change in second stage recovery times from 6 to 4 hours could be made safely in an effort to improve efficiency. It was demonstrated that there were no complications between 4 and 6 hours that would have delayed or compromised discharge at 4 hours post operatively¹. This has led to the implementation of a change in practice at LCH to 4 hour second stage recovery times for paediatric day case tonsillectomy operations.

Problem

Is the change in practice at LCH from 6 to 4 hour second stage recovery times prior to discharge from the surgical day case ward a safe practice?

Strategy for change

The change to 4 hour second stage recovery times has been implemented at LCH and has then been audited to assess for any complications due to this change in practice.

Measure of improvement

Several measures were used to assess the practice change, these were:

- What percentage of patients were being discharged at 4 hours in second stage recovery.
- Were there any problems/complications identified in the 2 hour window after 4 hour discharge. This was done by follow up via the patient's electronic notes as well as a telephone call to the patient's parents at about 1 week post operatively.
- Were there any readmissions to hospital especially within the 2 hour window between 4 and 6 hours post operatively.

Lessons learnt

It was demonstrated that 67% of patients were discharged at 4 hours. There were no readmissions or complications highlighted in the 4 to 6 hour window. This demonstrated a safe change in practice at LCH.

Of interest the follow up telephone calls to parents did demonstrate some contacts with various health professionals from day 2 post operatively onwards. These contacts were predominantly regarding analgesia issues or parental concern regarding oral intake. This has led to plans to standardise discharge analgesic regimes and to update parental counselling, as well as the information leaflets that are given to parents.

Message for others

The practice of 4 hour second stage recovery times prior to discharge is a safe practice for paediatric day case tonsillectomy operations.

Reference:

1 Sometimes less is more - reducing day case tonsillectomy discharge times from 6 to 4 hours. O. Boyle, R. Mistry, J. Murphy, T. Garner & J. Wolfe Barry. The Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust.