Assessment of ACGME Core Competencies Using an Ambulatory Surgery Patient Questionnaire

Stephanie B. Jones M.D., Stephen A. Cohen M.D., M.B.A.

Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, Boston, Massachusetts

Learner audience: Anesthesiology trainees

Needs Assessment: The ACGME Outcome Project, now in phase 3, requires "full integration of the competencies and their assessment with learning and clinical care." The ACGME asks for use of external measures, such as patient surveys, to "verify resident and program performance levels." In anesthesia, such feedback can be difficult to obtain, particularly from the ambulatory surgery patients that constitute almost 70% of the surgical population at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center. We describe the addition of core competency questions to an existing quality assurance survey.

Curriculum: Residents solicit surveys during their ambulatory and regional anesthesia rotations, with the goal of obtaining a return of at least 15-20 completed surveys. The written survey is given to the patient prior to surgery, includes a stamped, addressed return envelope. The bulk of the survey inquires about the patient's experience with pain, nausea, and vomiting at 24 and 48 hours after surgery. Although originally designed as a quality assurance instrument, the data obtained from this portion of the survey is valuable as a means of Practice-Based Learning and Improvement, one of the six core competencies. Residents can see how their choice of intra- and post-operative systemic and/or regional analgesia and anti-emetic selection impacts patient symptoms and satisfaction after they leave the hospital. They can then use this information to refine their practice in the future. Additional survey items address the Interpersonal and Communication Skills and Professionalism competencies. For example, the patient is asked "Did your anesthesiologist show interest in your anesthetic choices, risks and benefits of each in an understandable way?" We also address global professionalism on a 10 point visual analog scale.

Impact: Completed surveys are reviewed with residents during each semi-yearly evaluation. Patterns within the survey answers are sought, and individualized competency goals created. The discussion also assists in educating the resident about the core competencies and related expectations.

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