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Implementation of a Flow Nurse to Increase Emergency Department Space Utilization

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(i.e., sales). These studies failed to distinguish among the multiple unique products characterized as “energy drinks” (beverages, shots, and concentrates) and are confounded with caffeine-containing supplements (caffeine tablets, workout powders). Energy beverages dominate the market.

Design and Method: We performed a five-year database query of single-substance exposures to products described as “energy drinks” on the Texas Poison Center Network’s database. We analyzed the data for product type, multiples of recommended serving size consumed (dose), adverse outcomes, management site, and demographics. Individual case report forms were reviewed for moderate or major outcomes or death. We obtained five years of Texas sales data for “energy beverages.”

Results: From 01/01/10-12/31/14, we recorded 855 exposures to all products characterized as energy drinks (excluding those with ethanol or without caffeine). Of those exposures, 291 (34%) resulted in no or minimal effects and 417 (49%) were judged to be nontoxic or minor exposures not followed to a known outcome. Sixty-four (7.5%) were coded as moderate, and four (0.5%) major with no deaths. Serious complications included two self-limited seizures and one brief episode of ventricular tachycardia. Of the moderate and major cases, 32 (47%) occurred in children and adolescents. Common findings included nausea, tachycardia, and tremors. Energy beverages were associated with three moderate and no major cases, none in children less than 17 years. For all energy beverages, incidence rates of calls to Texas poison centers for moderate and major outcomes were 0.58 and 0.053 per hundred million units sold, respectively.

Conclusion: Serious toxicity can occur after excessive use of caffeine-containing products. With substantial variability of products described as “energy drinks” in poison center data, misperceptions of toxicity in post-marketing surveillance exist. Readers must consider the limitations and potential errors inherent in the data collection and coding of aggregate poison center data.

17 Implementation of a Flow Nurse to Increase Emergency Department Space Utilization

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Objective: Emergency department (ED) volumes continue to increase, with space often being a barrier to throughput. Most EDs have a resource nurse who serves many functions including maximizing space utilization in the ED. This study was performed to analyze if a dedicated “flow nurse” would affect utilization of ED space.

Design and Method: This was a before and after study, conducted at an academic hospital that has an ED with 55

beds and 20 sanctioned hallway spaces, seeing a volume of ~57,000 patients a year. The before phase (07/01/2016-08/30/2016) involved having a resource nurse who served multiple functions, only one of which centered on ED throughput. The after phase (09/01/2016-10/31/2016) featured a separate “flow nurse” from 11AM to 11PM Monday through Friday. Their responsibility centered on maximizing space utilization in the ED and ensuring efficient throughput. The outcome measure we compared was the number of minutes per hour where there were more than five patients in the waiting room, no patients inside the ED waiting to be seen by physicians, and less than 56 patients in the ED under evaluation. We termed this the utilization metric (UM). We used linear regression to test for a significant association between the UM and the presence of a flow nurse adjusting for confounders such as day of week, hour of day and month. Another outcome measure we compared was the left without being seen (LWBS) rate. We performed Fisher’s exact test to test for significance.

Results: We compared a total of 1,032 hours, 516 in both the before and after group. The UM improved an average of 205 minutes for the 60 hours per week when a flow nurse was on duty. We performed linear regression with the UM as the dependent variable and with the independent variables of day of week, month, hour of day, and presence of flow nurse as covariates. Presence of flow nurse was significantly associated with an improvement of UM ($p < 0.001$), even adjusting for the other covariates. The other significant variable, hour of day, had a $p = 0.01$. During the before phase a total of 4,022 patients were seen, with 87 LWBS (2.2%). The after phase had a total of 4,346 with 110 LWBS patients (2.5%). Fisher’s exact test yielded a $p=0.25$.

Conclusion: While the presence of a flow nurse did not significantly affect the rate of LWBS, it did significantly impact utilization of ED space to more effectively bring patients from the waiting room into the ED to be evaluated.

18 Bedside Ultrasonography for the Detection of Aortic Dissection in the Emergency Department

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Objective: Aortic dissection (AD) is a potentially life-threatening emergency requiring a high index of clinical suspicion. The most reliable diagnostic test is computed tomography (CT) angiography. Transthoracic echocardiography (TTE) has a lower sensitivity. We