

A Descriptive Study of the Surgical Nurse Liaison's Role from the Perspectives of Patients and Their Families in Alleviating Anxiety During a Surgical Procedure

Reginald P. Fernandez, MS, RN



Disclosure

Author: Reginald P. Fernandez, MS, RN

Session Goal: To recognize the relationship formed by a Surgical Nurse Liaison (SNL) with patients and their families that makes an impact on the quality of their perioperative experience.

Session Objectives:

1. To identify the five themes related to specialized practices of the SNL across the perioperative continuum.
2. To evaluate whether the role of a SNL in the perioperative area alleviates patients' and families' anxiety and improves their experience during a surgical procedure.

Conflicts of Interest: None

Employer: Northshore LIJ Health System

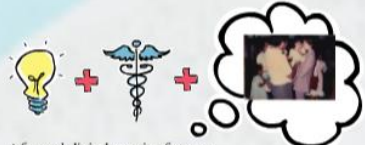
Sponsorship / Commercial Support: None

Background



**Perioperative Department
NYU Hospital for Joint Diseases**

- 40-50 Surgical Cases Daily
- Minor sports injuries to complex spinal fusions
- Located on the 1st and 2nd levels below the main lobby
- 16 Operating Rooms, 2 Recovery & Holding Rooms,
 - 1 Pre-Admitting, 1 Waiting Room
- Operating Hours 8am to 8pm



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Relevance of the Study

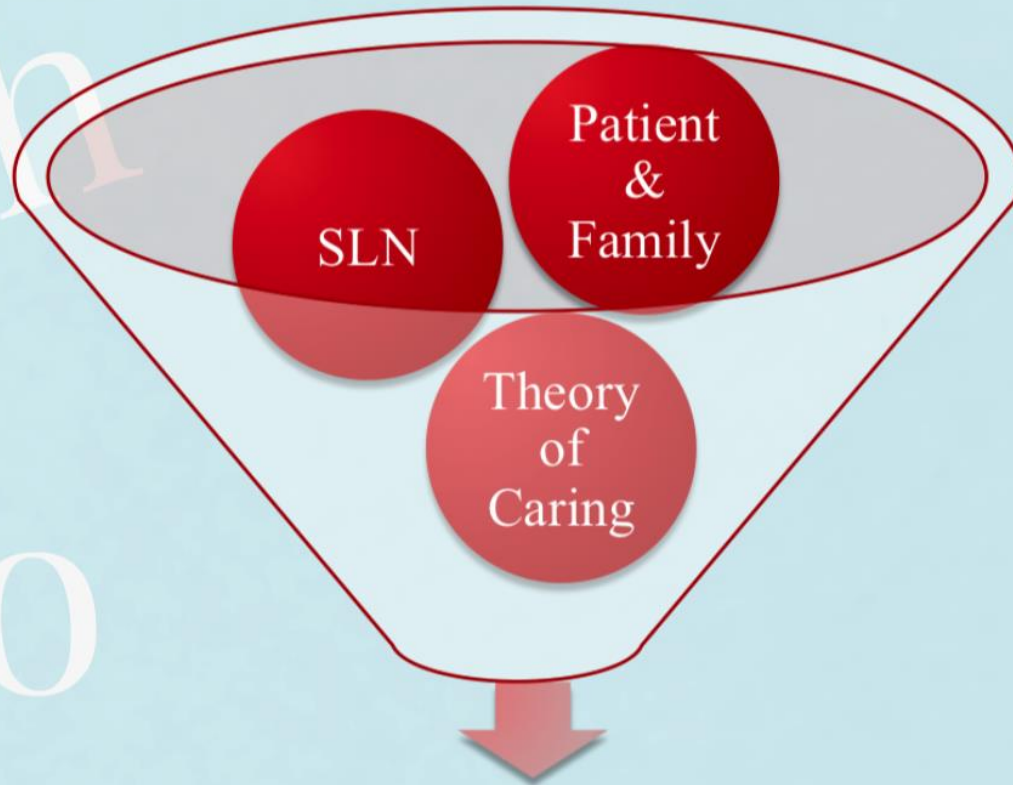
- Patient and family experiences become more stressful because of the many activities, various staff, different situations, and fragmented communication they encounter (Stefan, 2010).
- Anxiety arises because of the brooding, thinking, worry, and fear regarding the upcoming surgery (Cooke et al., 2004).
- Ineffective and inadequate communications are linked to higher levels of stress and anxiety and can also result in an overall feeling of dissatisfaction with hospital care (Stephen-Woods, 2003).
- Dissatisfaction with care and associated anxiety grows when family members become frustrated with gaps in information (Munday et al, 2012).



- Family members are still restricted from the PACU despite the support and advocacy of the ASPAN to encourage family visitation (Carter et al., 2012).
- The involvement of families as active partners in a patient's healthcare process would promote better clinical outcomes and fewer complications while in the hospital (Nelson, 2008).
- Anxiety and its effects weaken the patients' and families' confidence in the nurses, the doctors, the healthcare teams, and the institution (Lalani, 2013).
- An excellent perioperative experience is a result of a well-maintained high quality process of communication along with a true therapeutic relationship with the healthcare team (Mitchell, 2000b).



The Surgical Nurse Liaison



Patient Experience

Research Initiative

- Understand the role of a Surgical Nurse Liaison (SNL).
- Evaluate whether the role of a SNL in the perioperative area alleviates patients' and families' anxiety and improves their experience during a surgical procedure.

Review of the Literature

- Bailey (2010) identified evidence-based interventions for decreasing patient anxiety during perioperative services.
- 5 out of 10 studies identified perioperative teaching and providing information decreased patient anxiety levels.
- Study found that a perioperative nurse could consistently decrease patients' anxiety through non-medical interventions such as education and effective communication.

- MacDonald, Latimer, & Drisdelle (2004) examined the effects of intra-operative communication by an SNL on patient anxiety.
- 2 Groups: In-person progress reports from SNL & Routine perioperative care.
- 280 feedback forms were distributed to both groups.
- Results showed anxiety levels were lower for families who received in-person progress reports.

- Citaboyer et al. (2006) conducted a study on the positive effects of the liaison nurse's role in reducing discharge delays.
- Results indicated that patients whose discharge did not involve a liaison nurse were 2.5 more likely to experience delay of 4 hours or more than those who were discharged when the liaison nurse was not involved.

- Leslie (1996) examined the effect of intraoperative progress reports on 200 family members' experiences of anxiety.
- 4 Groups: no progress reports, face-to-face progress reports, written checklist, & telephone reports.
- The group that received in-person reports has significantly lower stated anxiety scores, mean ABP, and HfIs than the other groups.

- Cunningham et al. (2009) developed a family-centered program to improve information exchange.
- Of the 300 surveys, 210 (70%) were from families who interacted with the liaison nurse, & 124 (62%) who interacted with the liaison nurse met their needs.
- Interventions for providing information and support were linked to better coping, problem solving, & diminished anxiety.

Method

- A qualitative study using a descriptive approach to describe the participant's perceptions, opinions, or attitudes.
- Approval granted by NYU Department of Research and Education. IRB not required.

Setting

- Study conducted over 3 weeks in February & March 2014. Operating Hours 8am to 8pm.

Participants

- Various types of outpatients surgical cases
- 6 Patients & 6 Family Members (10% ADC)
- 30 minutes to 2 hour length of surgical procedures

Procedures

- Patients and families were invited
- Conducted non-participatory observations
- In-depth interview conducted separately
- 10-15 minutes in a secluded area
- 9 open-ended interview questions

Five themes were identified:

Acts as an Agent of Cultural Change and Engages Patients & Family Members in the Surgical Process

Acts as an Agent of the Organization in Improving the Perioperative Experience

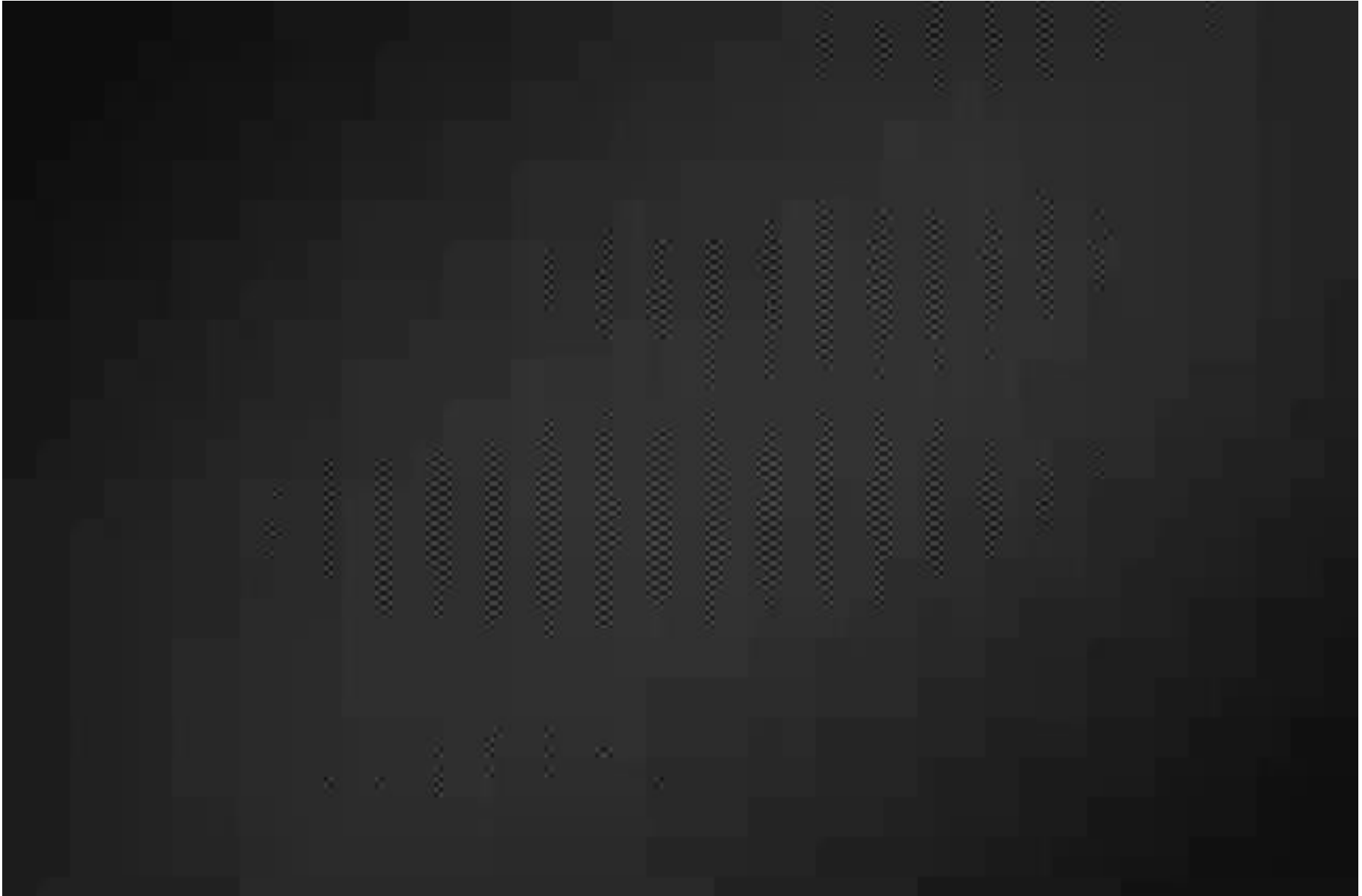
Situates the Patient in an Unfamiliar World

Connects to Patients & Families by Bringing Comfort and Humanity to their Experiences & by Reducing Anxiety

Navigates the System with the Best Interests of the Patients & their Family Members in Mind

SNL

Findings:



Implications for Practice

- These findings support the idea that the provision of timely updates can satisfy both practical and emotional needs of waiting family members.
- This study delineates the role of the SNL as a personal, caring, and individualized intervention in managing the anxiety of both patients and family members.

Recommendations

- The expansion in other patient care areas would benefit from further research and heighten patients and families' awareness of the SNL role.
- Surveys specific to how the SNL assists in providing support & collaboration to other perioperative team members must be considered.
- Surveys to investigate the perspectives of other nurses to define how the SNL role interfaces with their responsibilities.
- A cost analysis study of the effects on efficiency, outcomes, and patient satisfaction scores would benefit the organization.

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