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Pulmonary suctioning: Quality process and performance indicators

Pam O'Neal
University of Alabama, USA

Abstract

Suctioning of oral and pulmonary secretions is a common procedure performed daily across patient care areas and settings. The purpose of pulmonary suctioning is to remove secretions in the oral cavity, tracheal, and bronchial areas to improve gas exchange. The focus of this presentation is on quality pulmonary secretion recovery and removal to optimize patient comfort, satisfaction, and oxygenation.

Quality in suctioning is a concept that can be transitioned to the bedside and adopted in practice by considering the patient (characteristics and clinical conditions), the process (suctioning practice standards, evidenced based practice guidelines, and equipment function), and performance indicators such as health outcomes (morbidity, secretion recovery, patient satisfaction, and improved airway oxygenation). Adopting Donabedian's Quality Framework related to structure, process, and outcomes can guide the improvement of quality in suctioning and secretion recovery.

Various questions posed in the clinical setting will be addressed. How quality of suctioning is assessed and measured? What are associated patient outcomes of a quality suctioning event? How do you determine effective suctioning pressure? What is infection control and quality control of suctioning equipment?

Biography

Pam O'Neal is a registered nurse and has a Ph.D. in Nursing from Virginia Commonwealth University, master's degree in Nursing from the University of Tennessee in Memphis, and bachelor's degree in Nursing and Psychology from Union University in Jackson, Tennessee. She is an associate Professor at the University of Alabama in Huntsville, Alabama. She has more than 25 years of experience in nursing. She has clinical experience in cardiac and medical intensive care and administrative experience as associate dean and dean at several universities in Georgia and Alabama. She has presented and published in the area of pulmonary critical care and has served in numerous leadership positions with the American Association of Critical Care Nurses and Sigma Theta Tau International.

onealp@uah.edu