

Abstract

Purpose: Tonsillectomies are performed worldwide. Inconsistent pain management strategies used for pediatric patients undergoing a tonsillectomy result in postoperative complications. This quality improvement project aimed to demonstrate that implementing a standardized pain management protocol would significantly reduce postoperative complications in pediatric patients undergoing a tonsillectomy.

Methods: A quasi-experimental design was utilized. A retrospective control group of pediatric patients undergoing a tonsillectomy was compared with a group of pediatric patients whose care was guided by a standardized pain management protocol throughout a 12-week intervention period. Four outcomes measured using a Qualtrics survey; 1) the number of pain medications received in the recovery room, 2) the number of respiratory complications in the recovery room, 3) if the standardized pain management protocol was followed by the anesthesia provider, and 4) the usability of the protocol.

Results: The results revealed a significant decrease in the number of pain medications required in the postoperative recovery area ($P < .001$). Results also demonstrated a decrease in the overall number of respiratory complications, including masking and respiratory assist, in the standardized pain management protocol group. The protocol also received a high usability rating ($>4.65/5$) from the anesthesia providers who utilized the protocol.

Conclusion: A standardized pain management protocol demonstrated a reduction in postoperative pain, as indicated by a reduction in the number of pain medications required. The basis for this study could be applied to various age groups and many other surgical procedure types including bronchoscopies, circumcisions, and appendectomies.

Keywords: Tonsillectomy, Pediatrics, Pain, Respiratory, Complications, Protocols.