Reducing the number of surgeries that are canceled or rescheduled due to patient failure to stop anticoagulant medication

Anand Brahmbhatt, NP Student; Matt Nettles, Med Student; Taylor Thompson, Pharmacy Student
Clinic Preceptor: Jamie Wiggleton, APRN; Capstone Coach: Shannon Cole, DNP
Vanderbilt Head & Neck Surgery Clinic

Background

• The cost burden is high for rescheduling surgeries
• Rescheduling places burden on patients
• Simple interventions can help reduce number of avoidable reschedules
• Patients of Vanderbilt ENT do not receive reminder calls or texts regarding when to discontinue anticoagulants
• Surgeries would require rescheduling for patients actively taking anticoagulants
• Otherwise, patients would be at greater risk of bleeding during the surgery

Aim Statement

By April 1, 2020 we want to reduce the number of surgeries rescheduled and/or canceled for failure to halt anticoagulant medication recommendations in the head and neck cancer clinic.

Measures

• Between January to March 2020, we called adults, 18+, who were currently taking anticoagulants one day prior to surgery in order to remind them to discontinue anticoagulant therapy.

Results

• Out of six cancellations, zero were canceled because anticoagulants were not discontinued
• Six different reasons for surgery cancellation

Conclusions

• Sample size is too small to determine if intervention was successful
• Intervention is still meaningful because cost of rescheduling surgeries is still high, and patients might benefit from a reminder call or text
• The change items have not been adopted into the healthcare system yet due to lack of personnel and inability to implement automated methods

Lessons Learned

• When implementing interventions, it is important to think deeply about potential limitations due to the particulars of the patient population
• It may have been more efficient to include a phone and text option

Future Work

• Follow up on effectiveness of intervention in reducing the number of surgeries rescheduled
• Implement automated text messaging and call reminders to stop the anticoagulant in the EHR for the Head and Neck Surgery Clinic
• Implement automated text messaging and call reminders to stop the anticoagulant in the EHR for surgical clinics within Vanderbilt Medical Center

References