Post Cardiac Arrest Debriefing: How Well Do You Think You Did?

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Abstract

Introduction: The American Heart Association Guidelines for Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation and Emergency Cardiovascular Care 2020 recommends the implementation of performance-focused debriefing after in-hospital cardiac arrest. However, debriefing sessions are under-utilized and few studies have assessed their impact on healthcare providers’ perception of in-hospital resuscitation events.

Methods: An anonymous survey was distributed to providers who participate in code blue/ERTs at University Hospital, Rutgers New Jersey Medical School. It assessed providers’ experience with code blue/ERTs and their perspectives on recent resuscitation events. Participants were divided into those who participated in at least one debriefing session and those who did not. Primary outcomes were provider-reported teamwork, communication, and confidence in participation and leading a code blue/ERT, quantified using a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 to 5. Surveys were compared to surveys from prior years to assess if the intervention of a code blue didactics lecture, provided to residents resulted in any change in overall participation rate in the debriefing protocol.

Results: Among 181 participants (61% female), 32% were residents, 54% nurses, 1.7% respiratory therapists. Self-evaluated current knowledge of ACLS protocols was significantly higher in the debriefing group (p = 0.01), while there were no differences in perceived communication (p=0.800), and confidence in leading (p = 0.2) and participating (p = 0.2). There was no statistically significant difference in debriefing participation rate after our intervention (57% pre vs 58% post intervention, p=0.8), even when stratified by hospital role: ICU nurses (50% vs 71%, p=0.3), non-ICU nurses (68% vs 57%, p=0.3) and residents (67% vs 50%, p=0.2).

Conclusions: Participation in a post-code blue/ERT protocol-guided multidisciplinary debriefing session was associated with higher self-evaluated current knowledge of ACLS, however there was no increased participation after code blue didactics lectures.