

## BACKGROUND

Many nurses and patients are unaware of the leading cause of death among postpartum patients even though maternal death rates are rising in the United States<sup>5</sup>.

- About 700 women die each year in the U.S. from postpartum complications<sup>2</sup>
- Up to 60% of pregnancy-related deaths are preventable<sup>2</sup>
- 93% of nurses are unaware of the leading cause of death<sup>5</sup>
- Over 60% of nurses spend less than 10 minutes educating patients on warning signs of postpartum complications<sup>5</sup>

The question asked for this project is:  
Does providing training on how to educate patients on severe postpartum complications increase the postpartum nurse's confidence to provide effective education to new mothers at discharge?

**SAVE YOUR LIFE!** Get Care for These **POST-BIRTH** Warning Signs

Most women who give birth recover without problems. But any woman can have complications after the birth of a baby. Learning to recognize these POST-BIRTH warning signs and knowing what to do can save your life.

<b>Call 911</b> if you have:	<input type="checkbox"/> Pain in chest <input type="checkbox"/> Obstructed breathing or shortness of breath <input type="checkbox"/> Seizures <input type="checkbox"/> Thoughts of hurting yourself or your baby
<b>Call your healthcare provider</b> if you have:	<input type="checkbox"/> Bleeding, soaking through one pad/hour, or blood clots, the size of an egg or bigger <input type="checkbox"/> Incision that is not healing <input type="checkbox"/> Red or swollen leg, that is painful or warm to touch <input type="checkbox"/> Temperature of 100.4°F or higher <input type="checkbox"/> Headache that does not get better, even after taking medicine, or bad headache with vision changes

Trust your instincts. Always pay attention to your body. If you are not sure about a warning sign, call 911 or go to an emergency room.

Tell 911 or your healthcare provider: "I had a baby on \_\_\_\_\_ and I am having \_\_\_\_\_" (describe warning signs)

These post-birth warning signs can become life-threatening if you don't receive medical care right away because:

- Pain in chest, obstructed breathing or shortness of breath (trouble catching your breath) may mean you have a blood clot in your lung or a heart problem.
- Seizures may mean you have a condition called eclampsia.
- Thoughts or feelings of wanting to hurt yourself or your baby may mean you have postpartum depression.
- Bleeding (heavy, soaking more than one pad in an hour or passing an egg-sized clot or bigger) may mean you have an obstetric hemorrhage.
- Incision that is not healing, increased redness or any pus from episiotomy or C-section site may mean you have an infection.
- Redness, swelling, warmth, or pain in the calf area of your leg may mean you have a blood clot.
- Temperature of 100.4°F or higher, hot and smelly vaginal blood or discharge may mean you have an infection.
- Headache (very painful), vision changes, or pain in the upper right area of your belly may mean you have high blood pressure or preeclampsia.

**GET HELP** My Healthcare Provider/Clinic: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
Hospital/Clinic To Me: \_\_\_\_\_

AWHONN  
Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses

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## EVALUATION

A literature review revealed three themes:

- Improving nurse awareness of postpartum risks that can result in death for postpartum patients.
- Standardized patient teaching with educational bursts<sup>4</sup> and utilizing the Save Your Life handout.
- Patient learning outcomes are achieved through the teach-back method<sup>3</sup> and assessed with a patient survey.

Patient surveys will be encouraged after discharge teaching has been conducted and prior to discharge. Three months after the project implementation, the surveys will be compiled and reviewed to evaluate:

- Nurses' ability to provide clear, thorough patient education
- Correct patient understanding of postpartum complications
- The utilization of the Save Your Life handout
- The implementation of the teach-back method

## METHODS

The Iowa Model Revised framework will guide this project<sup>1</sup>.

- Step 1: Collaborate with the postpartum unit manager and unit educator to implement this project.
- Step 2: Use a PowerPoint presentation to educate nurses on postpartum complications and tools to improve patient teaching.
- Step 3: Implement roleplay practice for nurses to understand the teach-back method.
- Step 4: Provide a standardized patient handout to be utilized in discharge teaching.
- Step 5: Assess education provided to patients with a patient survey.
- Step 6: Review survey information and make improvements as needed.
- Step 7: Encourage lasting change and improvements.



## CONCLUSIONS

Maternal death rates in the United States are on the rise<sup>2</sup>. Many nurses are unaware of the leading cause of death among postpartum patients. The purpose of this project is to give nurses the tools to provide standardized education to postpartum patients regarding severe complications that can lead to death. Implementing educational "bursts"<sup>4</sup> and the teach-back method<sup>3</sup> will help nurses assess patient understanding.



## REFERENCES

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