Strategies for Having Specialized Nurses for the Cardiac Catheterization Lab

Dedicating a specific pool of nurses to the catheterization laboratory as opposed to cross-training nurses from the intensive care unit (ICU) is associated with better performance in the care of patients with AMI.

**CHALLENGES THAT MAY ARISE IF NURSES ARE CROSS TRAINED BETWEEN CATH LAB AND ICU**

- Limitations and delays in implementing complex procedures in emergencies because of a lack of experience in the cath lab among team members.
- Lack of direct and efficient communication that is developed through time and trust.
- Inability to develop deep familiarity with routines and ways of working under pressure and time urgency.
- Lack of confidence among team members that the nurse is capable of problem solving and trouble shooting.
- Limited familiarity and experience with the use of complex devices.
- Fewer opportunities to develop collaborative relationships with staff.

**STRATEGIES TO CONSIDER IF CROSS-TRAINING IS NECESSARY**

- Establish standards for the cath lab inventory, procedures, etc. in the form of checklists.
- Establish a system to assist cross-trained nurses with location of frequently used medications, supplies and resources available, if needed.
- Maintain documentation on common cath lab drugs and how they are mixed and administered (<1 page per drug) to serve as a reference for nurses who are not familiar with the location of drugs and supplies.
- Provide patient flow diagrams that emphasize key points necessary to effectively working in the cath lab.
- Have all cross-trained nurses work the same day/shift weekly in the cath lab to foster familiarity with routines and promote staff relationships.

**STRATEGIES TO INCLUDE CARDIOVASCULAR TECHS AND NURSES ON CATH LAB TEAM**

- Encourage team concept with those most familiar with the cath lab environment taking lead in the coordination of care in the lab.
- Have frequently used medications and supplies readily available for emergent cases.
- Maintain a checklist with frequently used medications and supplies needed for resuscitation, phone numbers for specialty services (i.e., pharmacy, anesthesia, etc).

**References**