Methods
A literature search was performed using CINAHL, EbscoHost, and PubMed databases.

Keywords: acute pain, patient education, pain management, subarachnoid hemorrhage

Inclusion Criteria: Articles addressing SAH pain, education and pain perception, and nurses’ role in pain management were included. Initial searches yielded 1,754 articles; 9 met inclusion criteria, and 5 were chosen for this project.

Findings
Literature shows that pain management in SAH patients is difficult, under-studied, and inadequate (Mahon et al., 2012).

Research demonstrates the correlation between nurse-led education on pain management, increased perceptions of pain control, and decreased pain severity (Pellino & Ward, 1998).

A questionnaire sent to 93 NCCU nurses revealed that 89% (n=37) believed SAH patients do not receive adequate pain relief and that patient education is inconsistent.

According to the HCAHPS (Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems) survey question asking “how often was your pain well controlled?” only 58.7% of NCCU patients responded positively, compared to an average score of 60.9% among University HealthSystems Consortium academic hospitals. This data reveals a need for intervention.

Conclusions
Pain associated with SAH is often severe and can lead to poor patient, family, and nurse satisfaction. The NCCU’s SAH pain management practices were determined to be insufficient and warranted change.

Following the implementation of pain management education in January 2016, the NCCU’s HCAHPS scores are being followed to assess the initiative’s effects.

Through increased pain management education by nursing staff, it is anticipated that the SAH pain experience and overall quality of care for all patients experiencing pain will be improved.

References


Special recognition to Emily Dettinburn, RN, BSN who contributed to this project.

Introduction
Subarachnoid hemorrhage (SAH) is a condition frequently associated with intense and persistent headache pain. Due to distinctive aspects in assessment, medication selection, and patient education for this population, SAH pain presents a unique challenge for patients, nurses, and the entire healthcare team. Therefore, the following question was posed: Can patient education about pain management and expectations associated with SAH by nursing staff positively influence patient perceptions of pain control?

Intervention
A brochure entitled “Help my Headache” was created to assist SAH patients and their families to better understand the cause of their headaches and how their pain will be managed. Staff were educated on how to implement the new initiative. Additionally, an informative poster was placed in the NCCU waiting room to encourage family involvement in pain management.

Findings
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