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# Preoperative Education: How Effective Teaching Impacts Knowledge with the Surgical Patient

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Preoperative Education: How Effective Teaching Impacts Knowledge with the  
Surgical Patient

by

Heidi Grossweiler

A thesis submitted to the faculty of  
Gardner-Webb University School of Nursing  
In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the  
Degree of Master of Science in Nursing

Submitted by:

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Heidi Grossweiler

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Date

Approved by:

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Dr. Vickie Walker

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Date

## **Abstract**

This research study involved questions identifying the perception of nursing staff related to preoperative teaching. Does initiating teaching, built through relationships and learning during the preadmission visit, have a positive effect on outcomes? The study design included a survey based on the Likert scale, evaluating nurses who conduct preadmission testing visits with patients in the outpatient surgical setting. The evaluation provided information about the correlation of information given between the nurse and the patient, which provides teaching guidelines for educating a patient preoperatively. A cover letter was given to the participant that detailed the purpose of the study and included the rights for participating in proposed research study.

## Tables of Contents

Chapter I	Introduction.....	1
	Background.....	1
	Conceptual Framework.....	2
	Significance to Nursing.....	3
	Theoretical Assumptions .....	4
	Research Question .....	5
Chapter II	Introduction .....	7
	Review of Literature .....	7
	Summary.....	11
Chapter III	Methods.....	12
	Sampling and Procedures.....	12
	Instruments.....	12
	Procedures.....	13
	Ethical Considerations .....	13
	Data Collection and Analysis.....	14
Chapter IV	Results.....	16
Chapter V	Interpretation of Findings.....	20
	Implications for Nursing.....	20
	Implications for Further Research .....	21
	References.....	22
	Appendices.....	24

## Appendices

Appendix A Gardner-Webb University IRB Approval Letter.....	24
Appendix B Cover Letter.....	25
Appendix C Questionnaire.....	26

## **List of Tables**

Table 1 Frequency and Percentage of Demographic Data.....	16
Table 2 Means of Standard Deviation of Questionnaire.....	19

## Chapter 1

### Introduction

Health-care professionals all over the world provide preoperative education to help patients to prepare for their surgery. The background of preoperative teaching for the outpatient surgical patient involves nursing staff providing education that includes expectations of the surgical procedure, medication and food restrictions before the procedure, as well as providing instructions for aftercare once a patient is discharged home. Patient education is carried out in various situations and within different frameworks therefore, the aim of education is very important. Several obstacles noted with preoperative teaching involve variance of techniques amongst nursing staff, level of learning with the patient and his/her family, and various amounts of education provided to the patient. Based on recent studies and information reviewed in various articles, it appears that there are gaps in how nursing staff provides preoperative information and the participant's perception from teaching related to a surgical procedure.

### Background

The need for adequate teaching for the outpatient surgical patient directly affects outcome based on interpretation of the patients. Tse and So, (2008) used a descriptive cross-sectional design that involved the nursing perspective on the importance of preoperative education to surgical patients. A problem was identified with the recent increase in ambulatory surgery and showed that preoperative teaching can be varied in time allowance for this important measure toward positive patient outcomes. The study concluded that the importance of reviewing and improving the effectiveness of teaching to improve quality care with surgical patients was essential.

## **Conceptual Framework**

The research study involves education and specific impact the learning experience has between the nurse and the patient. King's Goal of Attainment theory in 1971 developed a model for this study in identifying the process within the outpatient surgical experience. This theory is defined by the belief of perceptions of the nurse and patient influence within the interaction process and the goals and needs of the nurse and patient (McEwen and Wills, 2011). One major concept of this theory can be directly linked to how evidence practice can impact nursing and patient communication. King defines communication as a process by which information is given from one person to another directly in face-to-face meetings and involves perception, judgment, action, reaction and transaction (McEwen & Wills, 2011). Evidence based practice regarding the impact of adequate education shows direct positive outcome regarding the surgical patient in a variety of areas including expectations of surgical procedure, pain, medications, and overall outcome after surgery. With proper education and awareness of expectations and goals during a surgical procedure, the patient is empowered with the information provided by a nurse to improve his/her outcome. Comparing a patient who has emergency surgery versus a patient that has a scheduled surgical procedure, this theory can be acknowledged. When a procedure is scheduled, the patient is seen by the nurse during the pre-admission phase and is educated and informed on expectations and goals. A patient that has an unplanned procedure is unable to receive this information and allowed time to properly interact with staff and become knowledgeable due to the stress and circumstances related to an emergency situation.

### **Purpose of Study**

The purpose of the study was to describe the effectiveness of preoperative teaching. The focus of the study involve reviewing nursing staff opinions on specific teaching tools used, the impact on preparing the patient for outpatient surgical procedure, and positive impacts identified during the educational session between the nursing staff and the patient. The goal for the research study is to evaluate the nursing staff's perception within the hospital setting and to provide further research information on how nursing staff provides preoperative information and the perception of effective teaching practices related to a surgical procedure.

### **Significance**

The implications of the study can be defined by the importance of positive impacts based on adequate preoperative teaching. Several research studies have been done to evaluate patient expectations and nurse related factors involving the education involved prior to a patient having a surgical procedure. With recent changes within the healthcare system, outpatient surgical procedures have increased over the past several years versus hospital admissions. Changes in insurance, improvement of medical technology, and improved knowledge base related to surgical procedures has allowed a patient to return home the day of surgery. The significance of this study will assist in identifying the impact of preoperative teaching associated with preadmission testing with the outpatient surgical patient.

### **Definition of Terms**

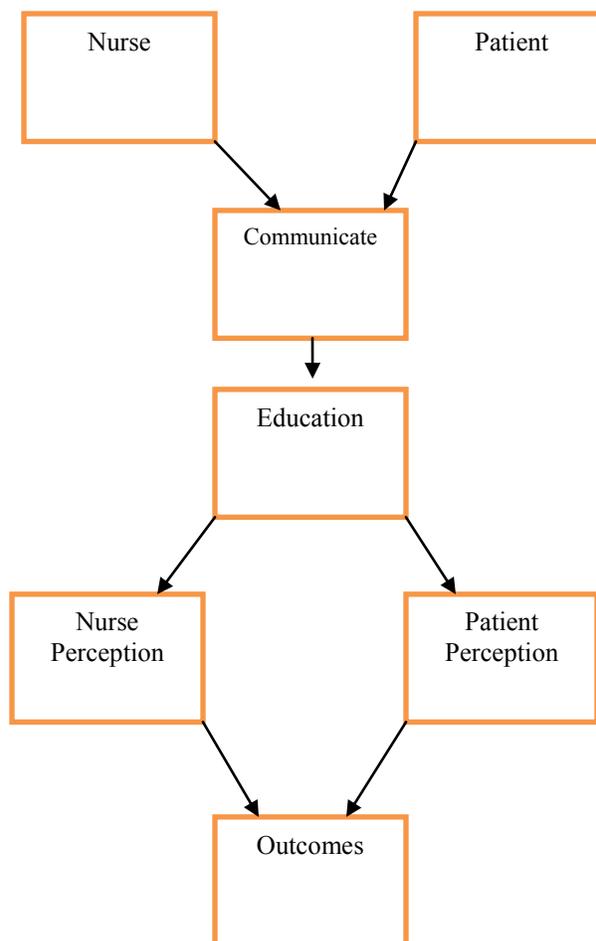
There are several keywords found within the research study. **Preadmission Testing:** A patient meets with nursing staff before the day of a surgical procedure to provide medical

history, summary of current medications, and history of prior surgeries. The nursing staff reviews and/or obtains lab work and various tests specified by the physician. Information is given to the patient by staff regarding what meds to take the morning of surgery, nothing by mouth after midnight the day before, and any special instructions specific to his/her type of surgical procedure planned. **Education:** The process of learning and developing the knowledge by teaching or training on a particular subject. **Preoperative:** The time frame prior to a patient having a surgical procedure. **Recovery:** The time after surgery that involves returning to health and consciousness with close observation and care. **Nurse:** An educated professional specializing in the care of patients in the healthcare setting. **Outpatient Surgery:** A surgical procedure that is conducted within a surgical setting in which the patient returns home the same day.

### **Theoretical Assumptions**

By evaluating King's Goal of Attainment theory in relationship to the perceptions of the preadmission testing nurse and the outpatient surgical patient, the concept of nursing practice is identified as a direct link to communication and that face-to-face meetings can have direct positive outcomes associated with expectations related to the outpatient surgical patient.

### Conceptual Theoretical Framework Diagram



#### **Research Question**

During the process of the research study, the question that the researcher is seeking identifies the impact of preoperative teaching. Does initiating teaching, built through relationships and learning during the preadmission visit, have a positive effect on outcome?

The analyses of the information provided by the nursing staff will involve a questionnaire identifying seven questions that evaluates the perception of effective education provided

during the preadmission testing visit with a patient. The questionnaire asked direct responses related to the education provided during the preadmission visit that will measure effectiveness related to medications, preoperative instructions, and understanding information given received during the outpatient surgical process. The research study is introduced to the nurse after he/she completes the preadmission testing visit to ensure immediate response to the nurse-patient interaction.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Introduction**

A literary review was accomplished by analyzing eight studies that involved the impact of preoperative teaching regarding surgical patients. The literature review provided information on various studies conducted to determine the impact that preoperative teaching provides to the surgical patients and outcomes.

### **Nursing Perceptions of Education**

Tse & So, 2008 used a descriptive cross-sectional design involving the nursing perspective on the importance of preoperative education to surgical patients. A problem was identified with the recent increase in ambulatory surgery and showed that preoperative teaching can be varied in time allowance for this important measure toward positive patient outcomes. Ninety one nurses within surgical centers and outpatient clinics completed questionnaires. The results showed a discrepancy amongst nursing practice and perceptions within the limitations of providing preoperative information. The study concluded that the importance of reviewing and improving the effectiveness of teaching during the preadmission visit can improve quality care with surgical patients (Tse & So, 2008).

### **Expectations of Ambulatory Patients**

A descriptive comparative cross-sectional study design was used to conduct a study on the expectations and perceptions of preoperative teaching specifically aimed at ambulatory orthopaedic surgical patients. (Heikkinen, et al., 2007) conducted the study to compare expectations, before surgery and after surgery, to evaluate the patients' knowledge base. A Hospital Patient's Knowledge Expectation Scale was used to

evaluate 120 patients who have participated in preoperative educational sessions. The results of this study showed that patients' had higher expectations of surgical education than they actually perceived that they were given during his/her surgical procedure (Heikkinen, et al., 2007). As a result of this study, analysis showed that patient's expectations regarding teaching during a surgical procedure and further research was need to learn how to meet patient's needs regarding education.

### **Educational Methods**

A systemic review of current literature was conducted by a group of researchers in Finland that studied preoperative teaching and current educational methods. Johansson, Nuutila, Virtanen, Katajisto, and Salanterä (2005) searched databases and meta-analysis was also used to identify articles related to educational interventions. Eleven articles were used to evaluate the data that involved 1044 participants and evaluation of the data resulted in a wide variety of education and teaching methods within the preoperative setting. The interpretation concluded there was a need for well-designed, logical research into the outcomes of patient education (Johansson, et al., 2005).

### **Effectiveness of Teaching**

Yankova (2008) conducted a research study using a comprehensive strategy to investigate preoperative patient teaching regarding patient controlled analgesia (PCA) related to preoperative teaching written by (Yankova, 2008). The aim of the review was to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching and optimal use of PCA related to the surgical patient. Data collection was used from six studies and found that there was a positive correlation between preoperative education involving PCA and the patients' knowledge base (Yankova, 2008).

### **Preoperative Education**

A qualitative study involving grounded theory was conducted by Hyde and Fitzpatrick (2007) that involved the effectiveness of preoperative education. This study was conducted to explore factor related to nursing staff that directly affected patient education in the preoperative setting. Twelve experienced nurses were interviewed to examine factors related to nurses themselves and how he/she can influence patient education given preoperatively. Face to face interviews were used to collect data and specific topics related to teaching were used as a guideline. The results showed that effective teaching was based on how a specific nurse provided information. The study also was interpreted as having a wide variance in practices and perceptions amongst the individual nurse that was interviewed and his/her experience related to preoperative teaching.

### **Preoperative Expectations**

A recent study conducted by (Chetty & Ehlers, (2009) involved a non-experimental descriptive and quantitative approach that reviewed preoperative education perceptions by orthopaedic patients. A problem was identified related to orthopaedic patients and if the education provided impacted the expectations of the preoperative patient. The data was collected from 50 orthopaedic by interviews that included demographic information and questionnaires. The evaluation of the data involved using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences to calculate the information received. The results of the study showed that 50 percent of the patients interviewed reported that inadequate teaching was provided regarding pain management, activity, and postoperative information. Recommendations were documented that included improving the quality of preoperative information and future studies on this specific topic.

### **Barriers to Education**

Using a descriptive study, researcher Riley and Lawless, (2009) evaluated family identified barriers and the relationship of information given by families to improved medication reconciliation. One hundred families completed a questionnaire to provide information on the collection of medications related to children with chronic conditions. Seven of the 10 questions was evaluated through content analysis to conclude the interpretation. The results showed that barriers to providing information on medications were identified including families' ability to provide information. The process of medication reconciliation with chronically ill children was proven to have further investigation on improving the process.

### **Educational Interventions**

A pilot study was used to conduct a study about preparing African American (AA) women regarding breast biopsy education. Bradley, Berry, Lang, & Myers, (2006) aimed to evaluate educational interventions used to prepare AA women for a specific surgical procedure. Self-Regulation theory was used for this study and involved 20 AA women using focus groups using a qualitative methodology. Items evaluated in the data included educational booklets, counseling techniques, and baseline/endpoint surveys. The results showed recommendations for revision of specific educational materials and showed that focus groups were an adequate way to find feedback on improving the preoperative education related to breast biopsy. Interpretation of this study emphasized the need for providing information for breast biopsy concluded in positive results.

**Summary**

After reviewing eight research studies regarding preoperative education and the impact on patient outcomes, a conclusion can be drawn that there is a further need to study this process. Based on patient interviews and information collected in the various articles, it appears that there are gaps in how nursing staff provides preoperative information and patients' perception from teaching related to a surgical procedure.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Methods**

The purpose of the study was to collect data from nursing staff who conduct preadmission testing visits with patients having outpatient surgery within a hospital setting to describe the effectiveness of preoperative teaching. The design used for the research study is a descriptive, correlational design identifying the relationship between the nurse and the patient during the preadmission testing visit and the impact of preoperative teaching. All participants are actively involved in completing educational sessions with outpatient surgical patients and the perceptions of the staff was reviewed for effectiveness. The evaluation looked at the correlation of information given between the nurse and the patient and how the perceives current teaching guidelines.

### **Subjects/Sampling**

The sample population within the research study includes ten nurses within a hospital setting conduct preadmission testing visits before a patient has a surgical procedure. Inclusion criteria involve the participant to be over the age of 18, have at least one year of experience in conducting preadmission visits, and have consented to participate in the research study. No one was excluded from the study based on gender or race. Recruitment for the study involved asking for volunteers within the preadmission testing department to participate in completing a questionnaire.

### **Instruments**

Prior to conducting the interviews, the researcher obtained permission from the Internal Review Board (IRB) for Gardner-Webb University and the facility in which the surveys were completed. Once approval was obtained, face validity was completed by meeting

with two orthopedic surgeons and three managers found within outpatient surgical facilities to review the questionnaire to ensure the content was relevant and clear and accepted the study as valid. Cover letters were given to the nursing staff prior to data collection. With the advancements in medical care and the increase of outpatient surgical procedures, the need for more detailed educational teaching is identified within the preoperative setting. Patients who electively have an outpatient procedure are dependent on nursing staff to provide adequate and informative education in the preadmission setting to provide positive outcomes postoperatively when discharged home. The aim of the study was to evaluate the current process of education and evaluate the perceptions of effective teaching methods with the preoperative patient.

### **Procedures**

Prior to interviewing the preadmission nursing staff, a cover letter was given to the participants which details the purpose of the study and the rights for participating in proposed research study. Each nurse had the opportunity to read the cover letter and at any time during the study the participant could decline to participate in the study. A copy of the cover letter was given to all participants at the time of the initial contact with the participant. The form provided the participant with contact numbers of the primary investigator (PI) and the Internal review Board (IRB) at Gardner-Webb University.

### **Ethical Considerations**

To provide an ethical study, the Gardner-Webb University IRB (Institutional Review Board) reviewed and approved the study (Appendix A). Permission from the participants was obtained by providing a cover letter (Appendix B) and the questionnaire tool was created by Heidi Grossweiler, RN (Appendix C). During the study, measures were taken

to protect the identity of the participant by making sure that no identifying marks were placed on the survey.

### **Data Collection**

The data collection for the research study involves several steps including how the data is collected, time and cost needed to complete the data collection, and identifying how the data will be summarized. The primary data collection tool is a questionnaire identifying seven questions that involve evaluating the education perceived during the preadmission testing visit with the nursing staff. The time allotted for completing the survey is 15 minutes, along with a 10-minute timeframe to explain the research study to the participant and to obtain consent. Costs for this research study involve two specific areas: the cost of the researcher's time to complete the study and the cost of printing the questionnaire. The research study is introduced to the participant after he/she completes the preadmission testing visit to ensure variances related to influencing the participants responses.

The questionnaire involves seven questions that ask direct responses related to the education provided during the preadmission visit that will measure effectiveness related to medications, preoperative instructions, and understanding information given to a patient regarding the outpatient surgical process.

### **Data Analysis Procedures**

Analysis of the data included measuring the information for quality issues such as accuracy and context. A numerical score was used to identify the ratings provided by the participants and accumulated statistically in a database system using a computer program. A codebook is designed to identify variables such as format, description, and location.

The data is presented in a table form utilizing Excel 2010 and will easily identify the researcher's conclusions of the sample collection and the significant differences within the study.

## Chapter 4

### Results

A total of 10 registered nurses were given the questionnaire and there was 100 percent participation for the study. Nine of the participants were female and one was male.

Ninety percent of the participants in the study had knowledge of completing preadmission testing visits with the average of five or more years of experience (Table 1).

Six out of the 10 participants have completed a level of education associated with a Bachelors of Nursing degree.

**Table 1 Frequency and Percentage of Demographic Data**

Demographics	Frequency	Percent
Gender		
Male	1	10
Female	9	90
Years' Experience		
0-1	1	10
1-5	0	0
>5	9	90
Education Level		
Associates	4	40
Bachelors	6	60

## Findings

The first question involved asking the nurse what he/she perceived was most helpful to the patient during the preadmission visit and found that 80% of the nurses felt the expectations the day of surgery were most helpful to patients while 20% felt that medications was most helpful. The second question involved evaluating the amount of time spend with the patient during the testing visit and revealed that 80% of the nurses spend 30-60 minutes with a patient during the preadmission testing visit, while 20% of the nurses spend 15-30 minutes with the patient.

The interpretation of the questions 3 through 7 provided to registered nurses using a Likert scale provided information regarding the nursing interpretation of how the preadmission testing visit is affective in providing information to the patient prior to outpatient orthopedic surgical procedure can be seen within Table 2.

The third question asked the nurse if they felt the timeframe was sufficient to provide information. The mean response of the 10 participants was 3.7 (SD = 0.483) indicating that the nurses somewhat agreed to the timeframe provided. This measured that 70% agreed somewhat and 30% were neutral.

The fourth question asked the nurse if the amount of time was provided to ask questions by the patient. The mean response of the 10 participants was 3.8 (SD = 0.422) indicating that the nurses again somewhat agree to the timeframe. This measure of frequency identified the majority of the nurses surveyed (70%) agreed somewhat that the timeframe was adequate.

The fifth question asked the nurse if his/she felt that the patient had a clear understanding of the medications required to take the morning of surgery. The mean response of the 10

participants was 4.0 (SD = 1.054) which resulted in the average participant somewhat agreeing that the patient had a clear understanding of instructions related to medications.

The sixth question asked if the nurse felt the patient understood the expectations related to the surgical procedure. The mean response of the 10 participants was 3.8 (SD = 0.632) which indicated that the average perception of the nurses surveyed agreed that the expectations were met with the patient during the preadmission testing visit.

The seventh question involved the perception of the nurse and the impact of improving knowledge for the patient during the preadmission visit. The mean response of the 10 participants was 3.9 (SD = 0.738) indicating that the nursing staff felt positive that the information provided to the patient impacted the knowledge of the patient regarding expectations of surgery.

The overall review of the questionnaire provided by the 10 participants in the study provided an example of King's theory of communication and how the impact of education and communication between a nurse and patient can have positive outcomes within the healthcare environment.

**Table 2 Means and Standard Deviation of Questionnaire**

Questions	M	SD
Question 3	3.7	0.483
Question 4	3.8	0.422
Question 5	4	1.054
Question 6	3.8	0.632
Question 7	3.9	0.738

## **Chapter 5**

### **Interpretation of Findings**

As the previous studies found within the literature review conducted for this study, it is clear that nursing staff make a positive impact on knowledge acquired during the collaboration of communication with the outpatient surgical patient. This study supports the other studies discussed and provides support on the need for ongoing analysis of patient educational techniques and how this information increases knowledge in a positive way. The study provided important information to continued success regarding the interaction of patients and nursing staff and will be beneficial in future studies. In conclusion, evidence based practice has shown that with the use of teaching, the nurse directly provides education to the patient and/or family in the preoperative setting and improves knowledge that directly will affect the outcome during the postoperative and discharge phase. This process involved the patient with direct involvement in managing healthcare and will be evaluated through research, literary review, and feedback from surgical patients. With proper education and awareness of expectations and goals during a surgical procedure, the patient is empowered with the information provided by a nurse to improve his/her outcome. By completing the research study, evidence was seen identifying the impact of adequate information given to a patient prior to a surgical procedure to ensure improved positive outcome and meet the expectations and need of the patient.

### **Implications for Nursing**

Based on the findings within the study, the study supported King's Goal of Attainment theory regarding the perceptions of nursing staff and how it relates to knowledge

influence with patients experiencing outpatient surgical procedures. As King describes communication as a process by which information is provided, the study provided insight to this theory that the impact of education can provide positive understanding and influence outcomes related to nursing practices.

Does initiating teaching, built through relationships and learning during the preadmission visit, have a positive effect on outcome? With the data collected during the study, the research question collaborated that nursing staff agree that the impact of educational teaching during a preadmission testing visit. According to the data, the participants felt that the timeframe was sufficient to provide information, as well as allow patients to ask questions related to his/her surgical procedure. Expectations related to the patient's knowledge base are also an area that nursing staff perceive as an area that is sufficient for the patient during the surgical procedure experience.

### **Implications for Further Research**

The limitations of the study involved the number of participant's completing the survey. Nursing staff viewpoints on meeting the needs of patients during a preadmission testing visit vary and there are clear differences in the dimensions of knowledge perception. A larger study regarding the question of teaching associated with outcomes would benefit implications for nursing practice and provide a more in-depth analysis of the impact on the outpatient surgical patient. Future recommendations would include an accumulation of a larger group of nurses that could provide insight from several outpatient surgical settings to compare perceptions. Another recommendation after completing the study includes using the information from a larger group of participants in a similar study to provide an outline for future preadmission testing visit educational information

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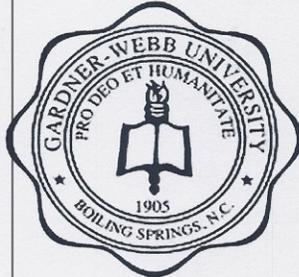
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THE INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD  
of  
GARDNER-WEBB UNIVERSITY

This is to certify that the research project titled  
**Preoperative Education: How Effective Teaching Impacts Knowledge with the Outpatient**

being conducted by Heidi Grossweiler

has received approval by the Gardner-Webb University IRB.

Date 6-18-12

**Exempt Research**

Signed [Signature]  
Department/School/Program IRB Representative

[Signature]  
Department/School/Program IRB Member

**Expedited Research**

Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
Department/School/Program IRB Representative

\_\_\_\_\_  
Department/School/Program IRB Member

\_\_\_\_\_  
IRB Administrator or Chair or Institutional Officer

**Non-Exempt (Full Review)**

Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
IRB Administrator

\_\_\_\_\_  
IRB Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
IRB Institutional Officer

Expiration date \_\_\_\_\_

IRB Approval:

Exempt  Expedited  Non-Exempt (Full Review)

## **Appendices**

### **Evaluation of Preoperative Teaching involving the Preadmission Visit**

#### **Cover Letter**

You are participating in the research project entitled **Preoperative Education: How Effective Teaching Impacts Knowledge with the Outpatient Surgical Patient**. The purpose of this project is to collect data regarding the preoperative teaching patients receive during an outpatient procedure. The goal for this research study is evaluate current practices within the outpatient hospital setting and to provide further research information on how nursing staff provides preoperative information and patients' perception from teaching related to a surgical procedure.

This project involves the completion of a questionnaire involving questions that ask direct responses related to the education provided during the preadmission visit that will measure effectiveness related to medications, preoperative instructions, and understanding information given received during the outpatient surgical process. There are no risks or benefits involved in this questionnaire and responses will be kept confidential.

## Research Questionnaire

**1. What specific information was most helpful to the patient during the preadmission testing visit with the patient?**

- Medications
- Expectations the day of surgery
- Pain management

**2. What amount of time did you spend with the patient during the preadmission testing visit?**

- 15 to 30 minutes
- 30 to 60 minutes
- One hour or more

**3. During my preadmission testing interview with the patient, I felt that the time frame was sufficient to provide information.**

1	2	3	4	5
disagree strongly	disagree somewhat	neutral	agree somewhat	agree strongly
----	-----	-----	-----	-----

**4. I felt that that an adequate amount of time was provided to ask questions by the patient during the preadmission testing visit.**

1	2	3	4	5
disagree strongly	disagree somewhat	neutral	agree somewhat	agree strongly
----	-----	-----	-----	-----

**5. I feel the patient has a clear understanding of what medications I instructed the patient to take the morning of surgery.**

1	2	3	4	5
disagree strongly	disagree somewhat	neutral	agree somewhat	agree strongly
----	-----	-----	-----	-----

**6. The patient has a clear understanding of expectations related to the surgical procedure involving what to expect before and after your surgery.**

1	2	3	4	5
disagree strongly	disagree somewhat	neutral	agree somewhat	agree strongly
----	-----	-----	-----	-----

**7. As the nurse providing information to a patient, the preadmission testing visit improved knowledge of what to expect the day of surgery.**

1	2	3	4	5
disagree strongly	disagree somewhat	neutral	agree somewhat	agree strongly
----	-----	-----	-----	-----