



ANMF (Vic Branch) Policy

Perioperative nursing

Incorporating: Anaesthetics, Post Anaesthetic Recovery Units

Policy

It is the policy of the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation (Victorian Branch) that:

1. The Victorian Perioperative Nurses Group (VPNG), the Australian Society of Post Anaesthesia and Anaesthesia Nurses and the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation (Victorian Branch) maintain that patients in a perioperative environment require the professional skills and knowledge provided by registered and enrolled nurses at all times.
2. The patient is in a vulnerable state both physically and psychologically pre, during and post anaesthesia and has the right to receive optimal care at all times.
3. Nursing care in this critical care environment is the primary responsibility and practice domain of suitably qualified or experienced perioperative registered nurses within a suitable skills mix. Enrolled nurses can form part of an agreed suitable skills mix within the care environment.
4. The quality of this care is reflected in the standards, guidelines and policy statements of ACORN (Australian College of Operating Room Nurses).
5. Provision of nurse staffing is consistent with the Safe Patient Care Act 2016.
6. The perioperative nurse is educationally prepared and can demonstrate the comprehensive range of skills and knowledge required to ensure integrated patient care, throughout all phases of the perioperative experience.
7. The critical nature of the individual patient condition in a perioperative setting has the potential to change within minutes in an emergency situation. In such instances, the nurse must be able to function in all perioperative roles and respond as the situation demands.
8. The perioperative nurse role requires specialist knowledge and application of nursing science, understanding and competence in carrying out complex procedures and in the use of specialised equipment. Perioperative nurses working in the area of anaesthetics are responsible for the nursing care of patients and assisting the anaesthetist in the safe administration of anaesthesia.
9. The use of appropriately trained technicians in this environment is to provide only non-direct patient care in technical and assistive areas. Theatre technicians (however titled) must not be utilised to replace suitably qualified registered or enrolled nurses.
10. In all perioperative situations where any type of anaesthesia is administered and maintained, a suitably qualified nurse should be present at the exclusive direction of the anaesthetist. It is considered that professional nursing knowledge and skills are essential in the maintenance of a safe environment in all aspects of patient management during critical intervention of anaesthesia and surgery. Therefore, nurses should assume the role of assisting the anaesthetist with educational opportunities being made available and appropriate staffing levels being implemented for this purpose.

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