PACU RN Exam Content Outline

Exam Objective
To measure the overall clinical knowledge of the RN in the PACU setting.

Knowledge Domains

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowledge Domains: PACU RN</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anatomy &amp; Physiology</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Complications</td>
<td>13%</td>
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<tr>
<td>PACU Clinical Practice</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pharmacology</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Professional Issues</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Safety</td>
<td>31%</td>
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Each question in this assessment is categorized by a cognitive level that the test taker would use to respond. These categories are:

**Recall:** The ability to recall or recognize specific information.

**Application:** The ability to comprehend, relate, or apply knowledge to new or changing situations.

**Analysis:** The ability to analyze and synthesize information, determine solutions, and/or evaluate the usefulness of a solution.
Content Outline

I. Anatomy & Physiology

   a. Knowledge of cardiac anatomy and physiology, including the identification of normal and abnormal electrocardiogram (ECG) rhythms
      i. Post-operative cardiogenic shock
      ii. Tachycardia, supraventricular tachycardia, bradycardia
      iii. Ventricular and atrial arrhythmias
      iv. Femoral blocks
      v. Neuromuscular Cascade
      vi. Managing and assessing epidural blocks
      vii. Spinal anesthesia and comfort
   b. Knowledge of anatomy and physiology as it relates to epidurals and medications given through the intrathecal route in the PACU
   c. Knowledge of the anatomy and physiology of the airway and nursing care needed to maintain an open airway
   d. Knowledge of the normal physical response to surgery, procedures, and/or anesthesia for example emergence of delirium
      i. GI distress including nausea and vomiting
      ii. Hemodynamics
      iii. Pain control
      iv. Respiratory distress
      v. Cardiac changes on ECG

II. Complications

   a. Knowledge of signs and symptoms of the types of shock including anaphylactic, hypovolemic, hemorrhagic, and cardiogenic
      i. Intravenous fluids
      ii. Respiratory support
      iii. Hemodynamic monitoring
   b. Knowledge of signs and symptoms of deep vein thrombosis and pulmonary embolism and standard prophylaxis
      i. Identifying signs and symptoms
      ii. Risk factors
   c. Knowledge of malignant hyperthermia, including identifying patients at risk, and what to do when a patient develops this reaction
      i. Monitoring and treating during surgery
      ii. Monitoring and treating post-operatively
   d. Knowledge of the signs of respiratory depression and interventions to implement when a patient develops respiratory distress
      i. Use of opioids for pain management
      ii. Airway and ventilator support

III. PACU Clinical Practice

   a. Knowledge of the Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS) protocol and how to implement it
   b. Knowledge to determine a patient’s pain level, implement pharmacological interventions for pain, and reassess effectiveness
      i. Opioid and NSAIDs use
      ii. Multimodal interventions
      iii. Anesthetic blocks
iv. Physiologic effects of unrelieved pain

c. Knowledge of how to recognize and report changes in the patient condition such as changes in vital signs
   i. Monitoring during medication administration of medications used for pain management
   ii. Monitoring the use of endocrine medication management
   iii. Monitoring of intake and output

d. Knowledge of surgical and/or procedural specific focused assessment
   i. Side effects of anesthesia
   ii. Consideration of comorbid conditions
   iii. Opioid therapeutic and adverse effects

e. Knowledge of the stages of recovery and nursing care associated with each stage of anesthesia
   i. Pain management
   ii. Fluid balance
   iii. Comorbid conditions

f. Knowledge of infection control practices in the perianesthesia setting
   i. Caring for surgical wounds
   ii. Prophylactic antibiotic management
   iii. Infectious disease precautions

g. Knowledge to assess, plan, and implement nursing care for patients in the PACU setting
   i. Identify risk factors for comorbid conditions
   ii. Pain management

h. Knowledge of nursing assessment and care for older adults, pediatrics, and specialized populations in the PACU
   i. Comorbid conditions
   ii. Medication management
   iii. Respiratory management
   i. Knowledge of coagulopathies and risk factors for increased bleeding in patients
      i. Assessing post-operative bleeding
      ii. Considerations for post-operative comorbidities such as Sickle Cell Anemia

IV. Pharmacology

a. Knowledge to determine a patient’s pain level, implement pharmacological interventions for pain, and reassess effectiveness
   i. Opioid and NSAIDs use
   ii. Multimodal interventions
   iii. Anesthetic blocks
   iv. Physiologic effects of unrelieved pain

b. Knowledge of which medications might be held or continued in preparation for a surgery or procedure
   i. Review of comorbid conditions and related medications
   ii. Review of medications taken by the patient prior to surgery

c. Knowledge of various routes of pain medications including epidural and regional blocks

d. Knowledge of different types of anesthetic agents and sedation medications
   i. Opioid analgesic medication administration and management
   ii. Continuous propofol infusion
   iii. PCA pumps
e. Knowledge of reversal agents and their indications for use in the perianesthesia setting
f. Knowledge and ability to calculate medication doses

V. Professional Issues
a. Knowledge of how to provide culturally competent care
   i. Language barriers requiring an interpreter for translation
   ii. Family dynamics and beliefs
b. Knowledge of discharge policies and procedures for patients going home after same day surgery
   i. Discharge location such as home, long-term care facility, assisted living facility etc.
   ii. Equipment needs for transport to discharge location such as oxygen or suctioning equipment
c. Knowledge of HIPAA and how to apply it in PACU
   i. Patient privacy in the PACU
   ii. Communication to family members and friends
d. Knowledge of safety practices, regulations, legal, and ethical guidelines that pertain to the PACU
   i. Maintaining safe distances for family members during tests such as an X-ray
   ii. Monitoring of input of information in devices such as PCA pumps
e. Knowledge of the various healthcare team members and their roles in the PACU
   i. Appropriate reporting of co-worker behaviors
   ii. Understanding policies and procedures
   iii. Delegation of tasks
f. Knowledge of how to use language resources to communicate with patients and family members in the PACU
   i. Patients or family members who speak a different language
   ii. Patients with impaired cognition or aphasia

VI. Safety
a. Knowledge of infection control practices in the perianesthesia setting
   i. Caring for surgical wounds
   ii. Prophylactic antibiotic management
   Infectious disease precautions
b. Knowledge of proper setup of PCA, and how to provide patient education related to use of PCA pumps for analgesia.
   i. Information entered into the PCA pump
   ii. Dosing considerations
   iii. Instructions to patients
c. Knowledge of safety practices, regulations, legal, and ethical guidelines that pertain to the PACU
   i. Use of infusion and respiratory equipment and their related procedures
   ii. Medication administration including anesthetics, opioids, and blocks
   iii. Universal Protocol