Operating Room RN Assessment Content Outline

Exam Objective
To measure the overall clinical knowledge in the Operating Room setting.

Knowledge Domains

Knowledge Domain: Operating Room RN

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. Intraoperative Care
   a. Knowledge of common anesthesia procedures and medications such as rapid sequence intubation.
   b. Knowledge of effects of anesthesia and levels of consciousness for various types of anesthesia such as general anesthesia, minimal sedation/analgesia, moderate sedation/analgesia, deep sedation/analgesia.
c. Knowledge of nursing interventions and monitoring required to evaluate effects of pharmacologic/anesthetic agents.

d. Knowledge of ASA (American Society of Anesthesiologists) classifications in which perioperative nurses may safely and independently participate in sedation activities.

e. Knowledge of physiological patient responses to surgical procedures and anesthesia such as levels of sedation, pain, and emotional responses.


g. Knowledge of sharps safety during intraoperative setting.

h. Knowledge of rationale for monitoring patient’s temperature during surgical procedures.

i. Knowledge of hemostasis such as to prevent blood loss, applying tourniquets, etc.

j. Knowledge of methods and protocols for preventing venous stasis, such as the use of compression stockings.

k. Knowledge of the positions used for different surgical procedures such as supine for face procedures and reverse Trendelenburg for hysterectomies.

l. Knowledge of safe medication administration including dosage calculations, medication labeling protocols, and pharmacology of common medications used in the surgical setting.

m. Knowledge of safe blood and blood products administration including nursing interventions for adverse reactions.

n. Knowledge of normal parameters for operating room temperature and their relation to the patient hyperthermia, hypothermia.

o. Knowledge of principles related to safety and documentation in the operating room such as intraoperative radiation and count discrepancy.

p. Knowledge of “time out” procedure and role and responsibility of the RN and team members.

q. Knowledge of specimen management such as documentation, handling, and verification.

r. Knowledge of how to maintain patient safety and prevent complications related to surgery including monitoring, body mechanics, ergonomics, and deep vein thrombosis prophylaxis.

s. Knowledge of standards and protocols related to the operating room including National Patient Safety Goals, Universal Protocol, and WHO checklist.

t. Knowledge of how to maintain sterility of surgical field, including aseptic technique and inspection of surgical products for expiration date and package integrity.

II. Environment, Equipment, Instruments and Supplies

a. Knowledge of the principles of environmental control and the importance of air exchanges, humidity, noise, room temperature, and traffic.

b. Knowledge of principles of counting sharps, sponges, and instruments as related to specific surgical procedures.

c. Knowledge of equipment and instruments and their proper use in the operating room such as the electrosurgical unit grounding pad, pneumatic tourniquets, and surgical needles.

d. Knowledge of the principles of transporting and storing equipment, sterile supplies, and instruments.

e. Knowledge of controlled conditions, event related, regulatory requirements, shelf life, storage, time related, tracking, transportation, and vendors.

f. Knowledge of safe handling of hazardous/biohazardous materials such as blood,
bloodborne pathogens, chemotherapy drugs, and radioactive materials.

III. Emergencies
   a. Knowledge of general anesthesia complications such as laryngospasm and malignant hyperthermia including the signs and symptoms, risk factors, and treatment.
   b. Knowledge of principles of fire safety and prevention throughout the perioperative setting.
   c. Knowledge of interventions for emergency situations such as cardiac arrest, myocardial infarction, anaphylactic shock, and how to implement Basic Life Support or Advanced cardiac life support.
   d. Knowledge of how to prepare for, manage, and/or assist in the event of respiratory complications such as airway obstruction, anoxia, arterial blood gas, aspiration, atelectasis, bronchospasm, difficult airway, hypoxia, laryngospasm, pneumothorax, pulmonary edema, and pulmonary embolism.

IV. Preoperative Care
   a. Knowledge of principles and proper procedures of skin preparation for various surgical procedures, including contraindications related to patient’s allergies.
   b. Knowledge of nursing tasks related to preoperative documentation such as surgical consent, advanced directive, and medication reconciliation.
   c. Knowledge of complete preoperative assessment including but not limited to, lab results, secondary medical conditions, allergies, risk factors for complications, and medication history.
   d. Knowledge of patient education related to common surgical procedures such as diet, pain relief, and emotional support.
   e. Knowledge of best practices and practice guidelines related to the surgical setting such as the SCIP protocol.
   f. Knowledge of how to create an individualized plan of care that addresses the patient’s needs related to their age, behavioral responses, comfort, spiritual, cultural/ethnic diversity, pain, and physiological conditions.

V. Infection Control
   a. Knowledge of infection control practices including types of surgical attire, scrubbing in, hand hygiene, and sterile technique.
   b. Knowledge of procedures and processes taken in relation to environmental cleaning, decontamination, spills, room turnover, and terminal cleaning.
   c. Knowledge of protocols for handling contaminated material and cleaning including the actions of disinfectants and cleaning agents.
   d. Knowledge of standard precautions and proper use of personal protective equipment for scrubbed and non-scrubbed personnel, such as donning of gloves, gowns, and masks.
   e. Knowledge of communicable diseases, such as tuberculosis, and transmission-based precautions such as contact, droplet, and airborne.
   f. Knowledge of the sterilization process and validation tests such as proper use of biological or chemical indicators, and steam sterilization process.
   g. Knowledge of determining surgical wound classifications (per CDC guidelines) such as clean, clean contaminated, contaminated, dirty.
   h. Knowledge of common causes of contamination of the sterile field and prevention
methods for maintaining sterility such as accidental touching of the sterile field and keeping others away from it.

VI. Postoperative Care
   a. Knowledge of how to provide continuity of care through communication such use of standardized hand-off.
   b. Knowledge of nursing care that is provided in the immediate post-operative period including identification of surgical complications such as bleeding and respiratory depression.
   c. Knowledge of how to safely transfer the patient to other settings such as the PACU and inpatient bed.
   d. Knowledge of surgical wound care including monitoring and care for drains and incisions.

VII. Professional Practice
   a. Knowledge of how to safely delegate tasks to other members of the interdisciplinary team (e.g. allied healthcare and/or nursing staff, unlicensed assistive personal) such as taking into consideration their competency, scope of practice, and patient safety.
   b. Knowledge of best practices related to visitors and vendors in the operating room including when to allow them into the operating room and how to protect patient privacy in their presence.
   c. Knowledge of delegating responsibilities to perioperative team members such as circulators and/or surgical technologists.
   d. Knowledge of necessary documentation during perioperative setting.
   e. Knowledge of advance directives, patient rights, and Do Not Resuscitate orders as they relate to the perioperative setting.
   f. Knowledge of role and responsibilities of surgical team members in the perioperative setting such as surgical technologists, physicians’ assistants, and circulators.
   g. Knowledge of effective communication techniques with the surgical team to promote patient and staff safety, such as closed loop communication.
   h. Knowledge of safe medication administration in the perioperative setting, including but not limited to contraindications related to patient’s allergies.
   i. Knowledge of how to confirm patient identity, such as date of birth, and patient name.
   j. Knowledge of HIPAA guidelines as it relates to perioperative setting such as how to protect patient privacy.