Minutes of the Meeting of the Working Group on Quality Improvement
during the 32nd ISICEM Symposium in Brussels

Date: Tuesday, 20th March 2012
Time: 14.30 – 16.00
Location: Room 204, SQUARE, rue Mont des Arts

Attendents: Andrew Rhodes, Rui Moreno, Michael Pinsky, Akos Csomos,
Maurizia Capuzzo, Marie-Lauence Lambert, Jan Raemakers,
Andreas Valentin

The meeting was entirely dedicated to the discussion of a new project of the WG on Quality Improvement – a study on the “The safety of intra-hospital transport of ICU patients”.
This study fits well in the prior work of the WG with two studies titled “Sentinel Events Evaluation” and will therefore be titled as SEE3 study.

Background:
Intra-hospital transports of ICU patients have been shown to constitute a weak point in patient safety (see e.g. Benoit Fanara et al., Critical Care 2010). There is a large variation in the organization and execution of intra-hospital transport of ICU patients. It is likely that such variations are associated with the occurrence of critical incidents during the intra-hospital transport of ICU patients. If this is true it should be possible to identify preventive measures with respect to patient safety during such transports.

Objectives:
• Primary objectives: to determine the frequency, characteristics, and contributing factors of sentinel events during the intra-hospital transport (IHT) of ICU patients.
• Secondary objectives:
  – to assess the impact of organisational and environmental factors
  – to identify preventive measures to increase the safety of intra-hospital transports of ICU patients
  – to encourage awareness for safety problems during the intra-hospital transport of ICU patients in participating intensive care units.

Methods:
• Multicenter, multinational study
• 2 week observation of IHT in ICU patients
• Measurements: Patients characteristics, transport characteristics, occurrence of critical incidents, event characteristics, grading of severity, clinical impact, contributing factors, preventive measures taken?

The participants of the meeting discussed extensively details of the study design. The observational, multicenter, multinational study will be conducted during a period of two weeks in participating ICUs. To avoid a confusion of different types of transport, the study will include only transports of patients from the ICU to a therapeutic or diagnostic facility within the same hospital (intra-hospital transport) and the way back to the ICU. If a hospital has more than one building, a transport is considered as “intra-hospital” only if no public traffic area is touched during this transport. The observation will assess sentinel events that did or could have harm to a patient. It will be a facilitated assessment on selected sentinel events related to:

- failure of equipment
- failure of power supply
- failure of oxygen supply
- removal of drains, lines
- loss of airway (tube, cannula)
- medication error (wrong dose, wrong drug, wrong route)

In addition any significant physiological decline (cardiorespiratory instability) during the IHT should be assessed. The definition of such an event was discussed, but needs further consideration. The study will not only assess critical incidents, but even more important the preparation for the transport with respect to equipment, patient’s condition, characteristics of the transport team, and transport organization.

A more detailed study proposal and design will be prepared for a discussion at the next WG meeting in Lisbon. During the meeting in Lisbon a timetable for the launch of the study will be proposed.

Any suggestions for the SEE3 study or the future work of the WG are more than welcome. Please send any suggestions to andreas.valentin@meduniwien.ac.at.

The next meeting of the WG on Quality Improvement will take place during the 25th annual ESCIM congress 2012 in Lisbon (13-17 October). The exact time and location of the meeting will be communicated as soon as available.

Andreas Valentin