

Triage on the Wards Summary

Triage

- “A process for sorting injured [or sick] people into groups based on their need for or likely benefit from immediate medical treatment. Triage is used in hospital emergency rooms, on battlefields and disaster sites, [and at night] when limited medical resources must be allocated.” -American Heritage Dictionary

Triage on the Wards – General Principles

- Get good sign-out
- Check on sicker patients at beginning of shift
- Anticipate how patients will get sicker and what you will do in response
- Know your resources ahead of time (physicians in-hospital (and outside), nurses, respiratory therapists, etc)
- Look/ask for trends (trends in vitals, trends in pain, etc)
- Communicate delays/concerns to your attending
 - Some delays can lead to poor patient outcomes (and your attendings can be helpful mobilizing resources, if they know)
- Communicate delays to nurses/families (when possible)
 - Most people are remarkably understanding if they just have appropriate expectations

How to Help Learners Who are Having a Hard Time Triageing

- Share organizational strategies with the intern.
- Have the intern make check-boxes for her “To Do” list on the sign-out and then rank how she would prioritize them. Then the senior can review the list and see how she might do it differently. Some interns haven’t ever written down their “To Do” lists, and it might help them to try this technique.
- Discuss expectations regarding how quickly pages need to be returned.
- Discuss how helpful it can be to let nurses know how long it will take to return the page.
- Discuss strategies for triaging duties (see above).

When to Escalate Care: Calling Rapid Responses or Codes

- What’s the difference between Rapid Response Teams and Code Teams?
 - Varies from hospital to hospital
 - General differences include
 - Different team members
 - Different response times
- Rapid Response Teams
 - Usually composed of one of the following groups:
 - PICU RN and RT
 - PICU RN, RT, PICU Attending/Fellow
 - PICU RN, RT, Hospitalist Attending/Fellow
 - PICU RN, RT, PA
 - Slightly Slower Response Time (typically within 5 minutes)
- Code Teams
 - Usually include PICU Attending/Fellow or Hospitalist + PICU RN + PICU RT +/- Pharmacist
 - Faster Response Time (immediate)