

## Guided Reflection Questions for Surgical Case 4: Vernon Watkins

### Opening Questions

How did the scenario make you feel?

-Due to the patients pain and shortness of breath following a surgical procedure, I was on high alert. I wanted to make sure the patient was comfortable while I was obtaining very important information such as vitals and ECG. His comfort was important however the tests I was doing needed to be done immediately.

### Scenario Analysis Questions\*

**PCC/EBP/S** Discuss your use of adjunct oxygen therapy for this patient, including why you chose a particular oxygen device, rate, and flow.

**-When his oxygen went down initially it was at 90. I chose to apply 2L NC to start. This maintained his oxygen for a few minutes but then it went down again. I then increased the NC one more time to 8, however if I were to do the scenario again I would have changed him to a mask and increased my O2 to 10.**

**PCC** Discuss Vernon Watkins' arterial blood gas (ABG) analysis result and explain what caused this result.

**-Vernons ABG results showed that he was in Respiratory Acidosis. This could be caused by a number of different things however his was caused by the PE and perfusion issues he was having at the time.**

**S/EBP** Discuss the use of a heparin nomogram (guideline for heparin titration) and safety related to this intervention.

**-It is important that you chose the correct heparin titration depending on your patient and their weight. The level of heparin given is very specific because if you do not give enough it will not be sufficient in dissolving the emboli in the lungs, and if you give too much your patient could bleed out. This is when dosage calculations are extremely important and checking your work with another nurse is necessary.**

**PCC** What key elements would you include in the handoff report for this patient? Consider the SBAR (situation, background, assessment, recommendation) format.

**-I would make sure to report that this is a post op semicolectomy patient who is refusing to ambulate, who then acquired bilateral PEs. He is being treated with heparin therapy and his ABGs showed abnormal findings. He is in quite a bit of pain and is needing his morphine every 4 hours.**

**PCC** Discuss why Vernon Watkins may be at risk for right ventricular failure as a complication of his pulmonary embolism (PE).

**-PEs increase the pulmonary pressure which could possibly initiate heart failure by disrupting right ventricular function.**

PCC

Discuss how you would communicate with the patient in acute respiratory distress in this emergency situation and what effective communication techniques you would use.

**-I would first educate the patient on what is happening to them and what we are doing to treat this patient. I would let him know that we know how to treat this situation and we will get him back to feeling better. Let him know that he can focus on himself and his breathing while we take care of everything else. Once we have him stable I would talk to him about the importance of following the ambulation requests postop and other things to prevent further clotting.**

### **Concluding Questions**

Consider what would have happened if Vernon Watkins' family members had been present at the bedside, and describe how you would have supported them during this acute episode. What would you do differently if you were to repeat this scenario? How would your patient care change?

-I would have allowed them to listen to me when I educated Vernon about what was happening. I would state that it was very important for me to get things started and assess the patient during the process, but I would have a PCT in the room so that they could be taken care of emotionally. I would let them know that once we had the patient stabilized that I would be available for any questions they may have.

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\* *The Scenario Analysis Questions are correlated to the Quality and Safety Education for Nurses (QSEN) competencies: Patient-Centered Care (PCC), Teamwork and Collaboration (T&C), Evidence-Based Practice (EBP), Quality Improvement (QI), Safety (S), and Informatics (I). Find more information at: <http://qsen.org/>*