Optimizing Supply Management In The Surgical Suite

Ensure OR efficiency with the right storage solutions to manage your facility's surgical supplies

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The surgical suite is one of the most expensive departments in a hospital. Accounting for and sufficiently storing and tracking inventory of the multitude of supplies—from instruments to tissues implants and more—is crucial to the efficiency of the OR, and to the overall profitability of the hospital.

Recognizing this, industry has developed a number of storage solutions for the OR and perioperative care areas to help facilitate efficiency in supply storage and management. Many of these solutions can be customized to suit specific OR needs. In the end, choosing the right storage solution to manage surgical inventory comes down to what will help your OR become as efficient and safe as possible.

For Beaufort Memorial Hospital (BMH) in Beaufort, SC, the solution they found worked best for their OR was to install a system of secure storage supply cabinets. The Pyxis ProcedureStation™ from Carefusion (formerly Cardinal Health) documents usage, inventory and replenishment of supplies. The system helps to standardize supply data to allow for easy and more accurate supply picking by surgical staff for each procedure's preference card.

As Kathryn Charles, Information Systems Analyst at BMH told *Surgical Products* in the June 2009 [1], the Pyxis ProcedureStation™ helped to make supply storage and inventory data more efficient, there was still something missing.

"In our case, [with Pyxis ProcedureStation™] we had all the supply data, but didn't have the cost of the supplies," Charles says. "We knew the average time of the procedure and supplies used on the preference card, but we weren't capturing the exceptions—item returns, additional supplies used—in the Picis [hospital information management system], so were not able to get the actual cost of the procedure."

To capture and store this cost information, the hospital integrated its Pyxis Procedure Station™ supply automation system with its Picis information system. This allowed the surgical department to not only streamline its supply storage and inventory management, but to also capture cost data associated with those supplies as accurately as possible.

According to a 2009 research summary [2] by Herman Miller, a manufacturer of OR storage solutions, a case cart system may be the answer for some surgical suites. According the document, a case cart system has the ability to offer a variety of benefits, including:

- The ability to consolidate and standardize inventory in a centralized system to avoid over-picking or picking items that are not used or used very little.
- Help utilize space efficiently by returning most supplies to central services rather than storing them in halls and the suites themselves.
- Help surgical staff utilize their time more efficiently by charging most supply handling to material management staff, allowing clinical staff to spend more time caring for patients.
- Improved infection control by reducing traffic in and out of the OR during a procedure, as well as offering added features such as locks and seals to protect any contaminated equipment.
- Effective information capture by stocking and unloading carts in central services.

Often, these case carts come with added features and benefits related to its design, construction and components to meet the specific needs of the surgical department.

These are just two examples of several available storage solutions for the surgical suite. From carts to supply cabinets to automation systems, the right solution will depend on a specific OR's needs. Making the right decision can allow the surgical department to manage their supplies efficiently and safely and make a positive impact on the hospital's profitability and overall patient care.

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