

# Electroconvulsive Therapy: Peri-procedural Nursing Management of Patients in the Post-Anesthesia Care Unit

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## Background

- Electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) involves brief electrical stimulation of the brain while the patient is under anesthesia (American Psychiatric Association (APA), 2023) and is administered by a team of specially trained medical professionals including a psychiatrist, anesthesiologist, and a registered nurse.
- ECT is a well-established, safe, and highly effective treatment for the relief of major depressions including bipolar disorder and schizophrenia (APA, 2023; American Psychiatric Nurses Association [APNA], 2011, 2021; Kitay et al., 2022; Sebastian, 2023).
- ECT is recognized as the gold standard treatment for treatment-resistant depression (Kirov et al., 2021).
- Despite its effectiveness, there is a gap in knowledge and stigmatized perceptions about ECT among health care professionals and the public which may inadvertently contribute to underutilization of this important treatment (Kitay et al. 2022; Kirov et al., 2021).
- The APNA (2011, 2021) position paper on ECT states that APRNs and clinical nurses should develop appropriate standards and education about proper administration, monitoring, and care of patients receiving ECT.

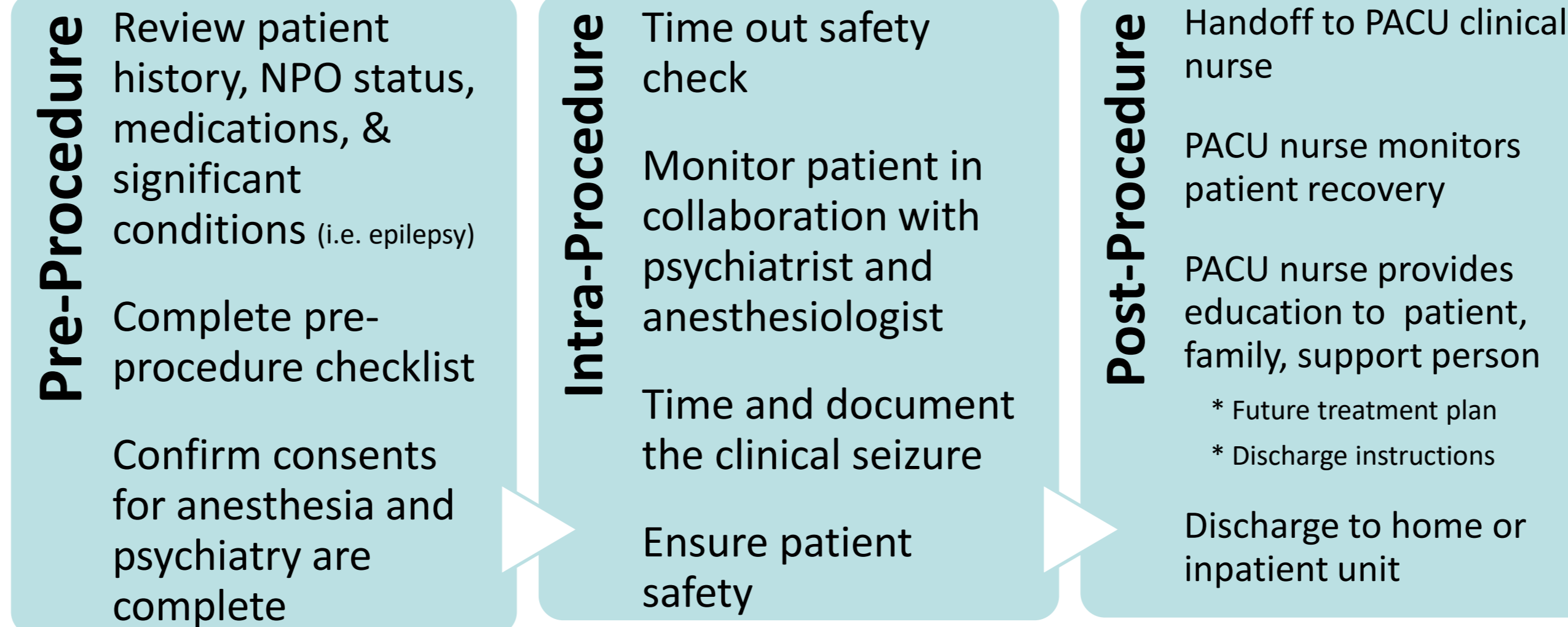
## Setting

- A 171-bed Magnet *with Distinction*™ designated community teaching hospital in the Northeast U.S.
- ECT is delivered in a 21 bed post-anesthesia bed unit.

## Purpose

- To describe peri-procedural nursing management of patients receiving ECT in the post-anesthesia care unit.

## Periprocedural Nursing Management for ECT



## Orientation, Education, & Competency

- **Orientation**
  - All peri-anesthesia clinical nurses are oriented to ECT as part of orientation
- **ECT Education**
  - Review ECT Resource folder
    - APNA Position statement, current peer reviewed articles, BWFH specific resources
- **ECT Competency**
  - Observe (*See 1*), Support assigned ECT nurse (*Help 1 – at the elbow assist*), Assigned as ECT nurse with ECT nurse champion observing (*Do 1*)

## ECT Procedures

- ECT is one of three interventional psychiatric treatments currently available
- Currently six ECT appointments are available on Monday, Wednesday and Fridays.

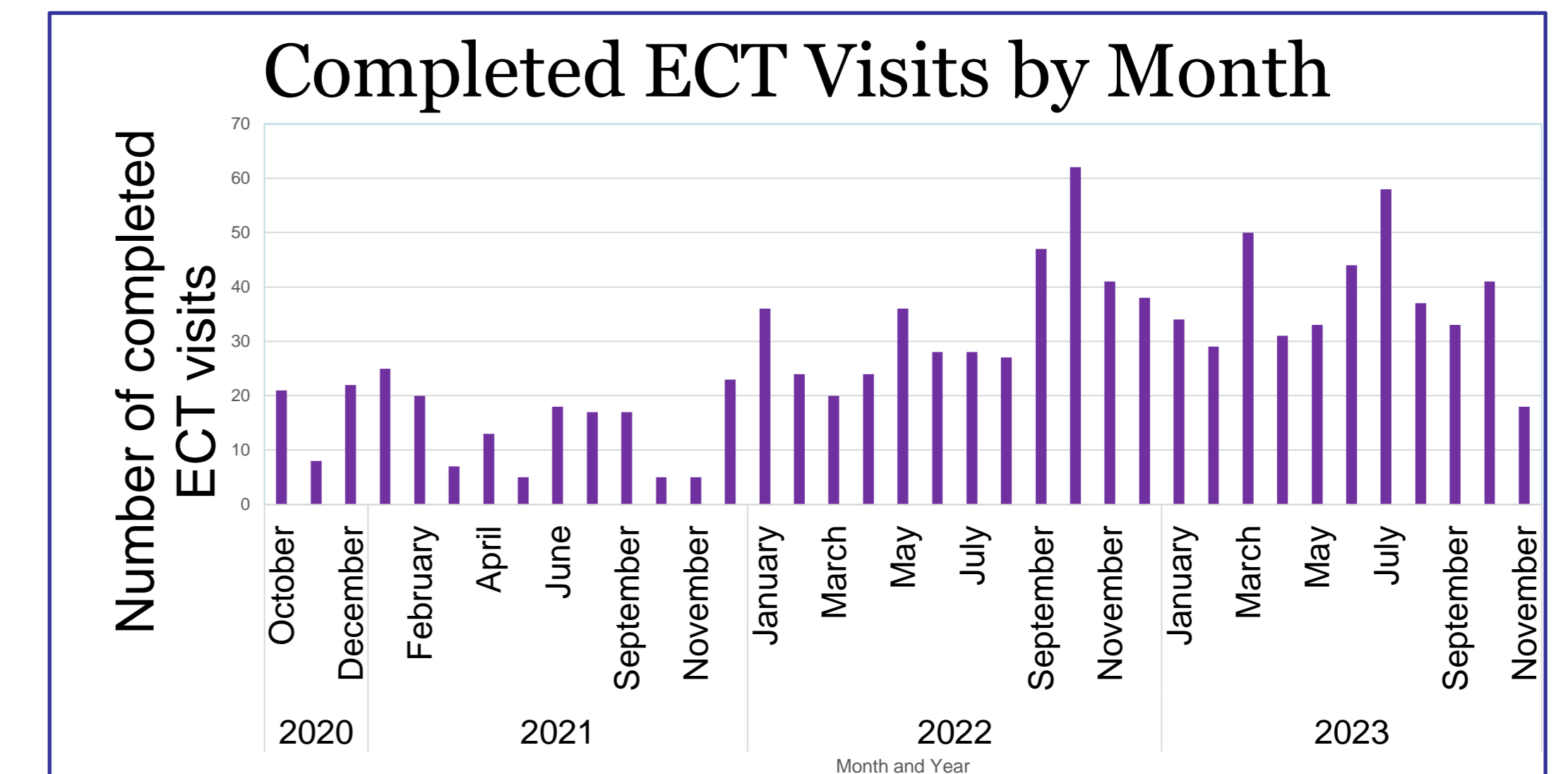
**ECT appointments:**  
**Monday, Wednesday, Friday**

**Six patients per day**

**Three nurses provide care to patients**      **One procedural nurse supports the team**

## Results

- Since the program began in the 1980s, the volume of ECT completed treatments has steadily increased.
- In CY23, the number of completed ECT visits was 450, a 190.323% increase from CY21 (155 visits).



## Discussion

- Ensuring access to critically needed psychiatric treatments is important for health care organizations across the country.
- Clinical nurses, especially those working in non-psychiatric practice settings, have a unique and essential role in ensuring that patients receiving ECT are provided high quality care throughout the peri-procedural time frame.
- By ensuring that patients, their families, and support persons are well educated about ECT, they are in a position to be advocates for this important psychiatric procedure.

## Contact Information

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