Earlier this week, I had the privilege of attending the first Nursing Grand Rounds. The purpose of this event is for nurses to educate their colleagues and other caregivers regarding various issues dealing with our patients. Nursing Grand Rounds is under the guidance of Keisha Wisdom, RN, Senior Director of Nursing and is being lead by MaryAnn Goodrich, RNC, Assistant Director, Nursing Operations.

The presenters for this week’s Grand Round were members of the Pain Management Team (PMT): Mary Evangelista, RN, 4 North; Doretta Janes, RN, 4 South; Linda Milano, RN, TNCC, Emergency Department; Renae Repice, RN, 2 North – South and Pediatrics and Beatrice Vanderhall, RN, 2 Central. The team did an excellent job educating the audience about pain and what we are doing here at Brookhaven for our patients.

The PMT spoke about how pain is an epidemic problem in the United States and a major issue for our patients. They indicated that pain is a very individual sensation and is whatever and whenever the experiencing person says it is. Also we learned that pain can only be described by the person experiencing it.

The Pain Management Team spoke of the many classifications, levels and management options for pain and how they are supporting our patients. In addition to a patient’s pain being assessed on a regular basis by the assigned nurse, members of the PMT also conduct rounds on patients with a specific focus on pain. There are non-pharmacological intervention options for the patients including: turning and positioning, physical therapy, application of heat/cold, massages or relaxation techniques. The PMT has also developed a Pain Cart with items that may assist in distracting the patient from the pain. The cart has DVD’s, VCR tapes, CD’s, stress balls, ear plugs, eye masks, puzzles, books and magazines.

The team is having an impact on the pain levels of our patients. The patients are expressing tremendous gratitude for the attention they are receiving. Nursing assessments indicate that the patients seem less stressed, calmer and more relaxed. Our HCAHPS scores regarding pain management and control have increased in the units where the PMT has been regularly engaged.

I thank the Nursing Department for hosting the Grand Rounds and the Pain Management Team for their presentation and for their very important work of providing our patients with extra attention and comfort. I look forward to attending future Grand Rounds.