Checklist in pediatric cardiac surgery in Brazil: an useful and necessary adaptation of the Quality Improvement Collaborative International Congenital Heart Surgery in Developing Countries

Checklist em Cirurgia Cardíaca Pediátrica no Brasil: uma adaptação útil e necessária do International Quality Improvement Collaborative for Congenital Heart Surgery in Developing Countries

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In May 2009, a partnership was signed between the Children’s HeartLink Foundation and Pediatric Cardiovascular Surgery Department of São José do Rio Preto, in the Base Hospital of the Medical School of São José do Rio Preto (FAMERP). Since then, we have introduced changes in order to identify predictors of morbidity and mortality, establish appropriate routines and improve the quality of care for children with heart disease - congenital and acquired in childhood - in our environment [1].

One of the opportunities offered by the Children’s HeartLink Foundation was participation in International Quality Improvement Collaborative for Congenital Heart Surgery in Developing Countries, program form the Boston Children’s Hospital - Harvard Medical School - United States, coordinated by Dr. Kathy Jenkins [1].

With this program, we began to participate in a worldwide database, based on RACHS-1 [2]. All surgical patients receive a number to prevent identification and information of the first 30 days or until hospital discharge are sent via Internet to the group at the Boston Children’s Hospital, which periodically informs us about our results so we can identify gaps and correct them.

The same group also minister videoconferences each month (called webinars), previously scheduled and with defined themes, which allows distance learning and facilitate dialogue between our group in Brazil and the group in the United States of America.

The primary aim of these classes and the program is to reduce mortality in 30 days and, therefore, three major themes have been presented and discussed throughout the year: basic practices for staff, reduction of surgical site infection and bacterial sepsis and safe practices during the operation.

The checklist for pediatric cardiac surgery, adapted, which we present below is part of safe practices during operation. It should be used to improve patient care, improve communication and team work dynamics in the

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## Checklist for pediatric cardiac surgery

### Before Induction

**SIGN IN**

- **Anesthesiologist and circulator together confirm:**
  - Patient data
  - Place of operation
  - Procedure to be performed
  - Allergy to drugs
  - Plan for keeping the patient warm
  - Need for blood products:
    If yes, has the blood bank been notified?

- **The anesthesiologist confirms:**
  - Venous access is suitable for the operation? What will be needed?
  - Possibility of difficulty intubation airway/aspiration?
  - If yes, what’s the approach?

### Before skin incision

**ATTENTION ALL**

- **All team members introduced themselves by name and role in the surgery**
- **The surgeon confirms:**
  - Patient’s name, site and type of operation
  - Relevant imaging studies and previous discussions
  - All necessary equipment is available (aspirator, saw and scalpel)?
  - How long does the procedure take?
  - Need for prosthesis?
- **The perfusionist confirms:**
  - Details on cannulation
  - Minimum CPB temperature
  - Cardioplegia
  - Need for selective cerebral perfusion and/or cerebral cooling with ice
  - Need for circulatory arrest, shunt, collateral arteries, procedures to air removal
- **The anesthesiologist confirms:**
  - Administration of antibiotics before incision
  - Plan for extra dose of antibiotics during surgery
  - Have the defibrillator paddles been plugged in?
  - Have the drug infusion pumps been checked?
- **The circulator confirms:**
  - Prostheses and other materials in the operating room

### After completion of the operation

**SIGN OUT**

- **The surgeon, instrumentist and circulator together confirm:**
  - The surgical procedure performed
  - Counting of gauze, needles and other materials

### Handover to ICU

- **The surgeon explains:**
  - The operation performed
  - Possible risks and complications

- **The anesthesiologist explains:**
  - Mechanical ventilation care
  - Hemodynamic stability and pressure support
  - Transesophageal echocardiographic findings
  - Availability of blood products
  - Other surgery details

- **Surgeon, anesthesiologists and intensivists discuss the need for testing and parameters to be controlled in the next 24 hours in ICU**

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*Fig. 1 - Checklist for pediatric cardiac surgery adapted from the Internacional Quality Improvement Collaborative for Congenital Heart Surgery in Developing Countries*
Fig. 2 - Checklist of cardiopulmonary bypass previously checked by perfusionist
Fig. 3 - Model of Pediatric Perfusion Form used for cardiopulmonary bypass
operating room, representing safety in the workplace for patients and professionals.

The video of this article is self explanatory and shows one of the routines that we use and believe that helps to prevent gaps in child care, allowing real and effective continuity during the treatment of heart defect in the preoperative, intraoperative and immediate postoperative period in Intensive Care Unit (ICU).

Determining a surgeon, an anesthetist and an instrumentist to be responsible for implementing the checklist is the first steps to success and adherence to all the team. Also, a large poster shall be posted on the wall of the operating room, so that at the time of completing the checklist no item is forgotten. The key word is: communication.

We believe that the checklist is easy to use, prevents errors and improves patient safety.

We expect all services in Brazil can use this process, which, as already demonstrated by the World Health Organization, saves lives and can be another tool to improve the situation of pediatric cardiac surgery in Brazil [3,4].

VIDEO DESCRIPTION
The checklist is basically divided into four parts: before induction of anesthesia, before skin incision, after the operation and during the passage of the operation performed to the ICU team (Figure 1).

PART I - PRIOR TO INDUCTION
The anesthesiologist and circulating nurse confirm together the patient data, the site of operation, the procedure to be performed, drug allergies, plan to keep the patient warm and the need for blood in the operating room.

The anesthesiologist talks about intubation and venous access.

PART II - BEFORE THE SKIN INCISION
All team members present themselves by name and what role should play during the procedure.

The surgeon again confirms the patient’s name, location and type of operation. He explains the most important tests, verifies that all materials and equipment needed are available, time expected for the procedure and the need for prostheses.

The perfusionist confirms details of cannulation, the minimum temperature during cardiopulmonary bypass, cardioplegia, need for circulatory arrest and other details necessary for adequate and safe perfusion, and may use a checklist of proper perfusion (Figure 2), different perfusion record should be completed during the procedure (Figure 3).

The anesthesiologist confirms antibiotic administration and maintenance, the proper functioning of cardiac defibrillation paddles and drug infusion pumps.

The circulating nurse confirms that all necessary materials are in the room.

Thus, all being in agreement and aware of the procedure, the start of the operation is authorized simultaneously by the team.

PART III - AFTER THE END OF THE SURGERY
The surgeon, instrumentist and circulating nurse, together with staff confirms the procedure that has been performed and make the conference of gauze and other materials.

PART IV – PASSAGE OF THE CASE TO ICU
In the ICU, the surgeon explains to the whole team he is receiving the patient with the surgery performed, possible complications and risks.

The anesthesiologist explains the care with ventilation, drug administration, hemodynamic stability, echocardiogram findings - when performed in the operating room -, availability of blood products and other data he may consider important.

The surgeon, anesthesiologist, intensivist, physiotherapist and nurses together discuss the case of the patient and do the planning for the first 24 hours in the ICU.

Thus, the checklist for pediatric cardiac surgery is conclude.

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