Automating a Maternal Early Warning

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Implementation of an automated Early Warning Score (EWS) with the Electronic Medical Record (EMR) was the first time that such a tool was used within the organization to provide clinical decision support and alerting to predict patient decline and alert the nurse. The tool chosen for the Medical Surgical population was not indicated for use in the Obstetric population, leaving this group without the benefit of early warning. Shortly after go live of the EWS tool, The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists published the article "The Maternal Early Warning Criteria, A Proposal From the National Partnership for Maternal Safety" by Mhyre, J. et al. This evidenced based article was evaluated by the organization's Perinatal Safety Committee. Automation of the evidenced based criteria within this publication to provide clinical decision support for an obstetric early warning tool was requested by this team. Design of the Maternal Early Warning Score (MEWS) commenced starting with the Systolic and Diastolic BP parameters. In addition to clinical decision support for both nursing and providers, a protocol was developed and approved for automation of interventions. In addition to clinical decision support, alerting and a standard protocol for the Obstetric population, the team now has metrics to evaluate compliance of nursing and providers to action when alerted and implementation of the interventions. While there were many lessons learned along the way, the journey taken may help others who desire to provide increased safety for the pregnant and postpartum patients within the organization.