Do not hurry, take your time!

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Nurses

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A nurse leader at a Swiss bronchoscopy center describes a serious sedation error—administering a 60ml propofol bolus instead of a 60ml/hour infusion—that caused patient apnoea, and the team-based safety lessons learned.

KEY POINTS

- The speaker accidentally administered a 60ml propofol bolus instead of initiating a 60ml per hour base rate to a 60-year-old ASA 3 patient undergoing EBUS bronchoscopy, causing apnoea requiring three minutes of bag-mask ventilation; the patient recovered after two hours in intermediate care.
- The root cause was identified as time pressure and failure to repeat the team timeout when the speaker entered mid-preparation to replace a nurse, despite institutional protocols requiring sign-in, timeout, and sign-out based on safety checklists.
- The center's safety structure includes a three-day staff training course with 30 documented cases, standardized SOPs, and electronic documentation that enforces step completion.
- Key lessons taught: always restart the team timeout from zero when new staff enter the room, do not replace staff during an ongoing endoscopy unless absolutely necessary, and never work in dual roles simultaneously.
- The speaker's main message is to resist time pressure and insist on adequate preparation time, and the team now enforces a policy that staff replacement for breaks occurs only after completing the current endoscopy.
- The center holds monthly meetings with physicians and nurses to discuss successes and failures as part of a failure culture that encourages reflection and system improvement.

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