

## **SALINAS VALLEY MEMORIAL HOSPITAL – Best Practice**

**ISSUE:** We were having difficulty with nurses focusing on and documenting stroke patient deficits. EMS uses the Cincinnati Pre-Hospital Stroke Scale (CPSS), while our emergency room physicians use the National Institute of Health Stroke Scale (NIHSS) to give report and document neurological deficits.

**GOAL:** To have nurses communicating with EMS and physicians in the same language pertaining to stroke patients and their deficits.

**SOLUTION:** After much research, we trained nine (9) registered nurses to perform the NIHSS and the Miami Emergency Neurologic Deficit (MEND) exam. We then had nurses choose which exam met the following requirements in the best way to meet our goal:

1. Easy and quick to perform
2. Easy and quick to document
3. Easy to remember
4. Communicates deficits accurately both to EMS and physicians

Without exception, every one of the nine (9) registered nurses chose the MEND exam over the NIHSS. The following statements were paramount in making their decision:

1. The MEND exam, being a combination of CPSS and the NIHSS, created a culture of “speaking the same language” with both EMS and physicians.
2. There are no extra tools needed to perform the MEND exam making it both easier and faster to perform. This gained huge “points” from all nurses, especially the emergency department nurses that would also be giving tPA and performing this exam every 15 minutes.
3. The MEND exam is substantially easier and faster to perform than the NIHSS, but gives the same outcome when documenting deficits.
4. While the MEND exam does have a numerical value when completed, the focus is on neurological deficits, not on a number.
5. Many times, three different nurses will do the NIHSS on three different patients and get three different numbers for their results. Using the MEND exam, documenting neurological deficits, nurses were much more likely to get the same results thereby documenting the patient’s neurological deficits more consistently.

**OUTCOME:** While we are only in the first month of completing the MEND exam on all stroke patients throughout their entire hospital stay, the documentation of stroke neurologic deficits has gone from less than 20% to well over 90%.

Salinas Valley Memorial Hospital has become one of only two training centers for Advanced Stroke Life Support (ASLS) on the West Coast, largely due to the inclusion of MEND exam training in the ASLS curriculum.

Attached is our ASLS class list for 2019. If you are interested in becoming an ASLS training center, please visit their booth at the International Stroke Conference.