

Safety Competencies Curriculum  
Domain 3: Communicate Effectively for Patient Safety

**CASE DISCUSSION FOR DOMAIN 3:  
COMMUNICATION FOR SAFE HEALTH CARE**

I am a third year pediatric resident, and find being the senior very stressful and challenging. I do not like the acute care setting, and received a marginal evaluation during my intensive care rotation.

It was the middle of the night when one of the patients began having a seizure. The child had stable ABCs, and I had given two doses of IV Lorazepam spaced appropriately, and the child still continued to seize. I was speaking to the attending physician over the telephone, and having a difficult time with the conversation. We just did not seem to be connecting – he kept asking me to do things I had already done, and I was getting frustrated. I had asked the nurse to draw up Phenobarbital 20 mg/kg before getting on the phone, and the attending finally suggested to go ahead and give that. I wrote a note for her to proceed writing “give Phenobarbital 20 mg/kg IV” on a piece of paper, while I continued to speak to the attending physician on the telephone. Approximately 3 minutes later, I walked into the patient room to find the nurse pushing the Phenobarbital, as I had the Lorazepam (over 3 to 5 minutes instead of 20 minutes!). The dose was near completion, and the child quit breathing. We called a code blue, and began bagging the child. Fortunately, we were able to successfully bag and intubate the child without him having a cardiac arrest. However, this event resulted in an intubation and ICU stay.

His parents were present when this happened, and are now I am told very upset. I was so nervous after the event occurred; I left the room and could not bring myself to speak with them. The ICU attending paged me to sign-over and asked me to leave a progress note about the event. I know that the nurses phoned the attending physician, who is on his way in to speak with the family, and I am sure he will have something to say too. I don't know if I can come back to work again after this.