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S&W gauging cardiac response

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TELEGRAM STAFF WRITER

Scott & White Memorial Hospital employees have been looking at its response to cardiac arrest through its resuscitation committee for some time. Interesting, considering a new study indicates a slow response in hospitals treating patients whose hearts stop beating.

About one-third of patients nationwide don't get a potentially live-saving shock within the recommended two minutes, a new study found.

"In November, Scott & White had only one code outside of its ICU units," said Dr. Stephen Sibbitt, associate chief medical officer at Scott & White. "That's phenomenal."

The success comes from giving medical staff the OK to call a rapid response team 24/7 if a patient is exhibiting any signs of instability, Sibbitt said.

Scott & White adopted a rapid response process that brings individuals with ICU training to the bedside of patients exhibiting signs of instability in order to get the patient to the ICU before cardiac arrest takes place, Sibbitt said.

Those who don't get prompt defibrillation are more likely to die or end up brain damaged or disabled, the study showed. For every minute of delay, the chances of survival worsens, researchers reported in Thursday's New England Journal of Medicine.

"It is probably fair to say that most patients assume - unfortunately, incorrectly - that a hospital would be the best place to survive a cardiac arrest," Dr. Leslie A. Saxon, a cardiologist at the University of Southern California, wrote in an editorial in the journal.



Scott Gaulin/Telegram Bill Schreier (left) and Trenton Vaughn, Scott & White RNs, demonstrate the use of a defibrillator on a simulation mannequin. The medical center has numerous individuals who are trained for advanced cardiac life support and are competent to deliver the first shock in response to a cardiac arrest situation.

In large academic medical centers there are many individuals, in addition to physicians, who are trained in advanced cardiac life support and are competent to deliver the first shock and the other necessary steps in responding to a cardiac arrest situation, Sibbitt said.

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