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EDITORIAL

NURSING HANDOVER THE UNKNOWN X IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF BEST NURSING PRACTICE

RESEARCH ARTICLES

NURSES' INCENTIVES FOR PARTICIPATION IN CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION ACTIVITIES AND THEIR HEALTH INFORMATION LITERACY LEVELS AMID THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

EFFECT OF AN EDUCATIONAL INTERVENTION ON KNOWLEDGE OF HUMAN PAPILLOMAVIRUS INFECTION AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN TURKEY: A QUASI-EXPERIMENTAL STUDY

FEAR OF COVID-19 AND COVID-19 ANXIETY AS PREDICTORS OF ADHERENCE TO TREATMENT IN PATIENTS WITH EPILEPSY

IDENTIFYING HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS' FEAR OF COVID-19 AND THEIR ATTITUDES TOWARDS BEING VACCINATED

REVIEWS

CURATIVE TO PALLIATIVE CARE TRANSITION CHALLENGES IN THE INTENSIVE CARE UNIT: A NARRATIVE REVIEW

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EDITORIAL ARTICLE

NURSING HANDOVER THE UNKNOWN X IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF BEST NURSING PRACTICE

The evaluation and improvement of quality in health services have concerned people since ancient times, with a typical example being the Oath of Hippocrates (5th century BC), which is still a code of good practice and ethics.

England's Florence Nightingale, who pioneered the foundation of modern Nursing, was the first to record and use and disseminate epidemiological data during the Crimean War to improve care in the late 19th century. The concept of nursing as a science but also the application of procedures to patients is inextricably linked to the concept of quality, a factor of best practice in the health services provided, an important parameter of these procedures is also Nursing Handover.^{1,2}

Nursing Handovers are a procedure followed in almost all hospital nursing departments and have been a practice for decades. This process includes the recording of information in the nursing file, the nursing charts of the patients, the organization of the way to manage and deal with the patients' problems (care plans) as well as the dissemination of the information in writing or orally which ensures a continuous, holistic, and qualitatively upgraded Health Care. It is an important parameter of nursing practice in general, even helping to interface between health professionals. Information, whether written, electronic, oral, or even videotaped, is used to monitor the progress of the patient's condition, reflects the care provided to him and helps improve communication between nurses and other health professionals.^{3,4}

Preserving the safety and quality continuity of care provided through nursing handovers is the primary role of its existence. Nursing handovers include a wide variety of topics, problems, and procedures. Researchers, clinical nurses, physicians, and hospital administrations consider nursing handovers as an important parameter that leads to ensuring the quality continuous provision of health care to patients as it is an integral part of evidence-based nursing practice.⁵⁻⁷

In the international literature, there is no exact agreement on the definition of "nursing information" as depending on the clinical environment, or the particularities observed in the health systems, this term varies. Accordingly, the description of the information process is referred to as "nursing handover"⁸, "shift report"⁹, while it is also referred to in terms that are difficult to translate into the Greek language, such as 'singover', 'cross-coverage'.¹⁰

Perhaps the most testable term was formulated by King and his colleagues¹¹, whereas nursing briefing, "it is defined the transfer of information (along with authority-competency and responsibility) between nurses at the change of nursing shift".

The content of nursing handover is complex and "includes communication between nurses, communication between attendants, patients, other health professionals and tools that will help and concern patient care".¹¹ Nursing Handover is also "a mechanism for transferring information, primary responsibility and authority from one or a group of nurses to the next shift team".^{12,13}

Factors that play an important role are mainly human, focusing in particular on behavior and interpersonal relationships between colleagues and the work environment.¹⁴ From the patient safety point of view, the primary purpose is for nursing

handovers to contain important and qualitative information about the patient's nursing care, promoting continuity of care the achievement, of therapeutic goals and the improving his health.¹⁵⁻¹⁷ In addition, they contain educational and sociocultural elements, as well as elements concerning the design and organization of the care provided, to stimulate teamwork and solidarity among colleagues.¹⁸

Ineffective nursing briefings can lead to omissions in patient care and violation of patient safety regulations, including medical and nursing errors, with consequences that can even lead to patient death.^{18,19}

Conclusion

In summary Nursing Handover is the daily process observed at every level of health care, involving the meaningful transmission of important information and the responsibility of implementing best nursing practice. It includes specific techniques and tools, which contribute to communication between health professionals, patients and their families. It includes a complex and multifaceted content, nursing updates are directly linked to the human factor, which determines their primary objective to maintain the safety and quality continuity of the health care provided always following the best practices.

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