



THE NURSING ROLE IN PATIENT CARE IN SAUDI ARABIA.

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Abstract:

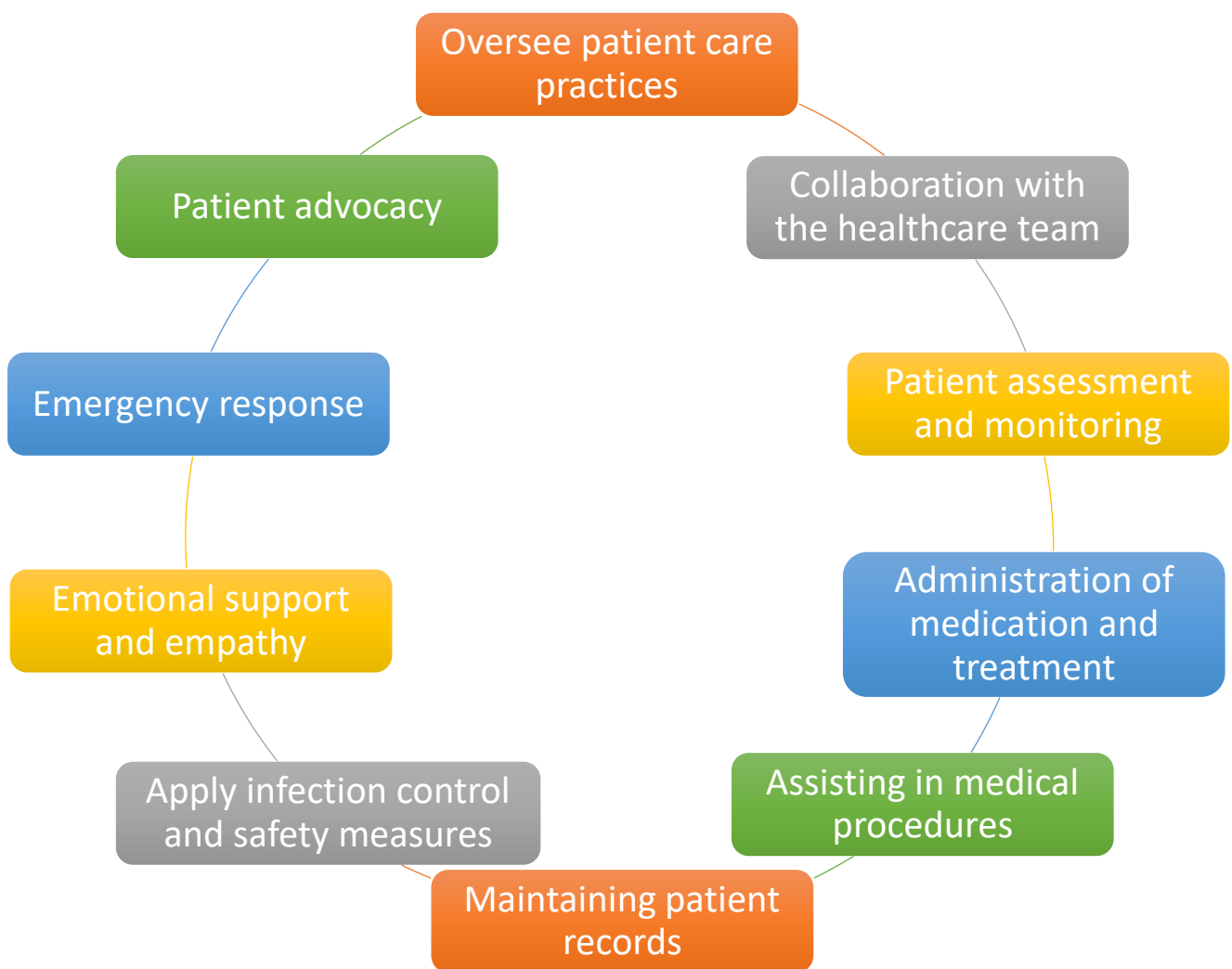
Nursing is vital in ensuring patient safety and providing quality patient care. Throughout the history of nursing, the role of nurses and the nature of nursing care has been defined in many ways. From an early emphasis on a task-oriented medical model of care to the current dynamic and multifaceted nursing practice, the definition and scope of nursing continue to evolve. The evolution of the healthcare system in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) provides a useful case study of how changes in the nature and structure of healthcare services influence nursing practice.

Introduction:

Nurses fulfill a pivotal and indispensable role in the realm of healthcare through providing patient-centered care, active collaboration within interdisciplinary teams, effective integration of technological advancements, and adept adaptation to the ever-evolving landscape of the healthcare industry. The duties and obligations of nurses have undergone a significant metamorphosis from being predominantly focused on manual tasks to encompassing highly specialized and autonomous roles that necessitate a profound level of knowledge and a diverse set of competencies. The nurses vehemently advocate for their patient's rights and well-being, ensuring their voices are heard and valued in decision-making and customized care plans to suit each patient's unique and individualized needs. By seamlessly integrating cutting-edge technology, nurses can efficiently gather and analyze data, remotely monitor patients, and administer care firmly grounded in evidence-based practices, enhancing and optimizing overall healthcare outcomes. The transformative shift in the landscape of nursing roles reverberates across all tiers and facets of healthcare provision, underscoring the critical necessity of cultivating adaptive skills and competencies in navigating digital health systems. Nurses are pivotal in ensuring the sustainability of healthcare systems, spearheading innovation, and catalyzing improvements in healthcare delivery through applying holistic and analytical thinking approaches. [1]. Patient care in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, specifically within various healthcare settings, including home health care, primary mental health care, hospitals, and inpatient wards, demonstrates a significant reliance on providing nursing services. Multiple factors come into play in this context, such as the overall quality of nursing services offered, the successful integration of mental health care services into primary care settings, the attitudes of nurses towards fostering a culture of safety, instances of missed nursing care activities, and the overall work environment experienced by nursing professionals, all of which

collectively have a profound impact on the level of care delivered to patients. Furthermore, the satisfaction levels of patients and their family caregivers, the extent of collaboration among healthcare professionals, the adequacy of available resources, and the presence of effective leadership within healthcare institutions emerge as critical components that influence the overall quality of patient care within the Saudi Arabian healthcare landscape. It is imperative to have a deep understanding of these multifaceted factors and to implement targeted interventions to enhance the quality of nursing care; address missed care activities, and foster improvements in the nursing work environment. These efforts are essential to guarantee optimal outcomes for patients and ensure the highest standards of safety within the healthcare system of Saudi Arabia. [2,3].

Figure (1): NURSING ROLE IN PATIENT CARE



OVERSEE PATIENT CARE PRACTICES:

Nursing responsibilities encompass a comprehensive and all-encompassing approach that considers various facets, such as addressing fundamental needs, providing spiritual care, advocating for patients, and upholding ethical standards. Nurses' pivotal role involves identifying and fulfilling patients' diverse needs, establishing compassionate and supportive relationships, and honoring the autonomy of each individual under their care. Moreover, the commitment to safeguarding patient well-being, ensuring informed consent is obtained, and championing patients' rights constitute

fundamental pillars of nursing duties within healthcare research settings. The proliferation of nurse practitioners has challenged educational preparedness, obtained necessary credentials, and fostered effective relationships with other healthcare professionals, necessitating implementing proactive and strategic measures to ensure proficient and efficient practice standards. [4,5].

COLLABORATION WITH THE HEALTHCARE TEAM:

The essence of collaborative care between nurses and various healthcare practitioners cannot be overstated, as it stands as a critical determinant in enhancing patient outcomes and overall satisfaction levels. Research findings underscore the paramount importance of interprofessional collaboration in not only mitigating errors but also elevating the quality of patient care and optimizing the allocation of hospital resources. The significance of fostering effective communication channels between nurses and physicians emerges as a cornerstone in guaranteeing patient contentment and the delivery of high-quality healthcare services. Furthermore, the evolving landscape of nursing roles in patient-centered care is characterized by increased autonomy, active participation in care planning processes, and seamless integration within interdisciplinary teams, ultimately culminating in providing personalized and evidence-based care that enhances patient outcomes. Implementing strategies centered around interprofessional collaboration, such as using assessment tools and conducting whiteboard meetings, has been pinpointed as instrumental in facilitating comprehensive follow-up care and promoting health among patients grappling with intricate healthcare needs within in-patient settings. [6,7].

PATIENT ASSESSMENT AND MONITORING

Nurses in Saudi Arabia fulfill a pivotal role within healthcare settings through their active involvement in the comprehensive process of patient evaluation and continuous monitoring, thereby substantially contributing to fostering a culture of patient safety and optimizing the overall work environment within hospital premises. Studies conducted in various regions of Saudi Arabia, including Jeddah, Jazan, and the central region, emphasize the importance of assessments made by nurses about the prevailing safety culture among patients and the overarching work milieu. These rigorous investigations underscore the necessity for perpetually advancing the existing frameworks governing safety culture within healthcare institutions, particularly in critical domains like collaborative teamwork, organizational knowledge acquisition, and the establishment of effective channels for communicating errors to augment the overall caliber of patient care delivery. The multifaceted factors that impinge upon the quality of patients' sleep experiences during their hospitalization journey, such as ambient noise levels, frequent interruptions, and the nature of care-related activities, serve to underscore the profound influence wielded by nursing practices on the fundamental aspect of promoting restorative periods and facilitating optimal recovery for patients under their care. Furthermore, the distinctive attributes characterizing nurses, encompassing facets like their educational attainment levels, cumulative professional experiences, and the specific patterns governing their shifts, exert a discernible impact on how they perceive the prevailing dynamics within their respective work environments, thereby accentuating the pressing demand for meticulously tailored interventions intended to elevate the standards of nursing practice and ultimately facilitate the overall outcomes experienced by patients [8-11].

ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATION AND TREATMENT:

One of the most crucial responsibilities that nurses frequently undertake is the administration of medications, a task that carries a high level of importance due to the potential for drug administration errors, which pose a significant threat. Interruptions during the medication administration process, often originating from the nurses themselves, have been identified as contributing to clinical errors and procedural breakdowns, thus underscoring the critical need to minimize disruptions to enhance patient safety outcomes. Furthermore, nurses have been observed to exhibit a strong sense of readiness and motivation when prescribing medications under the supervision of healthcare providers, indicating a keen interest in broadening their scope of practice

within patient care. Moreover, nurses are viewed as pivotal in carrying out various tasks within the context of medication reconciliation procedures, thereby underscoring their significant contribution towards ensuring the safety and accuracy of medication regimens for patients. [12,13].

Nursing Responsibilities in Out-Patient Settings:

Nurses in outpatient settings play an extremely pivotal and indispensable role in providing patient care, as well as in the facilitation of self-management of medications and the overall enhancement of patient outcomes. Within the realm of outpatient care, nurses are primarily dedicated to the enhancement of patient health outcomes through the implementation of effective and meaningful interactions, the provision of holistic care that encompasses the entirety of the patient's well-being, and strict adherence to treatment regimens that are crucial for the patient's recovery and well-being. Furthermore, nurses in outpatient settings also contribute significantly to promoting multidisciplinary teamwork, ensuring patients receive a comprehensive and well-rounded care experience that addresses all their needs and concerns. Given the escalating complexity of patient needs, particularly in chronic conditions such as diabetes, nurses emerge as indispensable assets in the continuous quest to elevate the quality of care provided to patients and ultimately enhance the overall quality of life experienced by patients in outpatient settings. Their multifaceted roles span across various domains, including the dissemination of health education, provision of support for clinical research endeavors, and the facilitation of the intricate transplant process, all of which are intricately interconnected and aimed at achieving superior patient outcomes and advancing the delivery of healthcare services to unprecedented levels of excellence.

ASSISTING IN MEDICAL PROCEDURES:

Nurses, including nurse practitioners and nurse surgeons, play pivotal and indispensable roles in upholding patient safety and ensuring high-quality care during various medical procedures within healthcare settings. Their duties encompass crucial responsibilities, including preoperative preparation, intraoperative support, and postoperative care. [14]. These tasks include but are not limited to implementing stringent patient safety measures, streamlining and standardizing healthcare practices, mastering the art of time management, ensuring adequate staffing levels, fostering effective interprofessional communication, and offering the necessary support and reassurance to patients within the confines of the operating room environment. Furthermore, nurses are actively engaged in facilitating psychogenic interventions aimed at alleviating patient anxiety, meticulously attending to physical preparations to mitigate the risk of potential complications, and delivering postoperative care that plays a pivotal role in facilitating patient recovery and minimizing the likelihood of post-surgical complications. In addition to these critical roles, nurses are integral in meticulously documenting patient care activities, ensuring the seamless delivery of appropriate care interventions. By adhering to standardized operating procedures and protocols, nurses contribute significantly to positive patient outcomes by facilitating effective communication channels and the unwavering commitment to upholding safety standards within the healthcare setting. [15].

MAINTAINING PATIENT RECORDS:

Nurses hold a pivotal and indispensable role within the healthcare system when it comes to the meticulous task of maintaining patient records through the painstaking process of documenting every detail of the care provided, which in turn ensures the seamless continuity of care and also aids in supporting the intricate clinical histories of patients. It is imperative to highlight that the accuracy in record-keeping practices is a cornerstone for providing safe and high-quality patient care, thus positioning it as an indispensable and non-negotiable fundamental element within nursing practice. In the contemporary healthcare landscape, there has been a noticeable shift towards utilizing Electronic Nursing Records (ENRs) as a modernized alternative to the traditional paper-based record-keeping systems. These ENRs bring many advantages, including but not limited to enhancements in the overall quality of patient care, the completeness of records, and the time efficiency they offer to nurses in their daily workflow. Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge

that challenges do exist within the realm of ENRs, with notable concerns revolving around the ability of these digital systems to accurately reflect the individualized and nuanced aspects of patient care, as well as the ongoing struggle to maintain the utmost levels of precision and reliability in the data documented within these electronic records. [16].

Their responsibilities encompass meticulously maintaining detailed accounts of care provided, monitoring patient progress, and developing clinical histories. Nurses must guarantee that their records are thorough and all-encompassing, illustrating a personalized approach to patient care to bolster safety and quality standards. Various obstacles, such as time constraints, increased workloads, and a scarcity of materials for recording, can impede the accuracy of record-keeping processes. To confront these challenges effectively, it is crucial to implement continuous educational programs, maintain oversight, ensure the availability of sufficient recording supplies, and exercise appropriate time management techniques. [16,17].

INFECTION CONTROL AND SAFETY MEASURES:

Nurses play an essential role in infection control and safety protocols, bearing significant responsibilities in ensuring the implementation of evidence-based strategies such as the correct utilization of personal protective gear, maintenance of optimal hand hygiene practices, proper management of hazardous waste, and strict adherence to aseptic methodologies across both community and healthcare environments. Within the broader spectrum of healthcare facilities, the infection prevention and control guidelines are designed to mitigate the occurrence of healthcare-associated infections by enforcing various preventive measures, including standard precautions, thorough cleaning and disinfection procedures, effective waste disposal protocols, and safeguarding the well-being of healthcare personnel. Moreover, nurses operating within surgical settings hold a pivotal position in upholding patient safety through their involvement in tasks like preoperative preparations, establishing standardized protocols, efficient time management strategies, and providing unwavering support to patients throughout various medical procedures. [18,19].

EMOTIONAL SUPPORT AND EMPATHY:

Nurses assume a fundamental and pivotal role within healthcare settings by offering indispensable emotional support and empathy to individuals seeking care and treatment. It is incumbent upon them to meticulously evaluate not only the physical well-being of patients but also their psychological and spiritual requirements with a compassionate and understanding approach, thereby cultivating a therapeutic alliance that contributes significantly to patients' overall contentment and fulfillment. The cultivation and demonstration of empathy by nurses equip them with the capability to not only comprehend the multifaceted challenges faced by individuals under their care but also to devise and implement personalized and intricate care plans that cater to the unique needs of each patient, thus providing unwavering support during periods of vulnerability and distress. Various research studies have indicated that nurses' empathy levels remain largely detached from demographic variables, underscoring empathy's inherent and intrinsic essence as a cornerstone of nursing practice and patient care provision. Furthermore, it has been established that nurses who exhibit a high degree of empathy and are thoroughly engrossed in their professional environment are aptly positioned to dispense bespoke and individualized care with a heightened level of efficacy, particularly in prolonged care settings, consequently leading to a direct enhancement in patient health outcomes and overall well-being. Aspiring nursing practitioners are strongly advised to partake in structured and rigorous educational programs designed to cultivate and refine their capacity for compassionate care, augmenting their proficiency in empathetic understanding and application during their clinical placements and professional practice. It is worth noting that the incorporation of empathy into the spectrum of care not only serves to lessen the quality of communication between healthcare providers and patients but also exerts a positive influence on patient outcomes and satisfaction levels, ultimately culminating in a more productive and gratifying care experience for all involved stakeholders [20]. In the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, providing emotional support and empathy by nurses towards patients, particularly in critical care environments, plays a vital and indispensable

role. A research study sheds light on the difficulties critical care nurses encounter in their interactions with patients, which stem from cultural, religious, and linguistic disparities amidst the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic [21]. These challenges are further exacerbated by issues related to end-of-life decision-making, bed shortages, lack of essential supplies, and the pervasive fear of infection, all of which underscore the pressing necessity of addressing the fundamental needs of foreign national Critical Care nurses. These needs encompass not only survival requirements but also the nurturing of relationships and opportunities for personal and professional growth and development. Furthermore, it is worth noting that critical care nurses in Saudi Arabia often grapple with moral distress when they find themselves in ethically complex situations, such as when they are required to adhere to family preferences that contradict their values and principles. This underscores the importance of providing these healthcare professionals with emotional support and effective coping mechanisms. Recognizing and catering to the psychological and psychosocial requirements of foreign national Critical Care nurses during extraordinary epidemic scenarios is paramount to the delivery of comprehensive emotional support and empathetic care within the healthcare landscape of Saudi Arabia.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE:

Nurses engaged in emergency response within the healthcare system of Saudi Arabia are tasked with pivotal responsibilities when it comes to addressing a wide array of challenges that may arise. To navigate these challenges successfully, these healthcare professionals must possess diverse competencies within emergency nursing. These competencies encompass but are not limited to the adept management of patient care, the skillful handling of critical cases, and the cultivation of effective communication strategies. The experiences gained through training programs by nursing interns within the emergency departments of Saudi Arabia shed light on the paramount significance of honing both technical proficiencies and interpersonal skills. Furthermore, it is emphasized that a comprehensive understanding and mastery of triage assessment principles are crucial for nurses operating within the Emergency Department, with a notable level of proficiency consistently observed among Saudi nurses. [22]. Noteworthy observations made during the COVID-19 pandemic underscore the exceptional levels of awareness and readiness exhibited by primary healthcare nurses in Makkah, particularly in terms of their ability to elucidate triage procedures comprehensively and make optimal use of screening areas. In a holistic sense, it is evident that nurses who are part of the emergency response framework in Saudi Arabia must be thoroughly equipped with a robust set of competencies, extensive training, and a state of preparedness that is second to none, all of which are essential for effectively navigating emergencies and ensuring the delivery of high-quality care [23].

PATIENT ADVOCACY:

In Saudi Arabia, nurses hold a significant and weighty burden of responsibilities when it comes to patient advocacy. Various scholarly investigations and academic studies have pointed out the indispensable and pivotal role that nurses undertake in championing for the rights, safety, and provision of high-quality care for patients. It is within the realm of expectations that these healthcare professionals approach their patients with the utmost respect, not only providing treatment but also taking the time to impart knowledge about their medical conditions and diseases, all the while ensuring that the healthcare environment remains conducive to safety and well-being. Furthermore, nurses are intricately involved in the intricate process of medication reconciliation, a collaborative effort where they work closely with physicians and pharmacists to meticulously prevent any potential errors or discrepancies in the administration of medications. This underscores the critical nature of their involvement in upholding patient safety standards within the healthcare system. Additionally, a plethora of scholarly works and academic research highlights the fundamental pillars of patient advocacy that nurses must embody, including but not limited to, the ability to care for patients with acute attention to detail, championing for the rights of those who are most vulnerable in society, and taking into account the diverse cultural and religious beliefs of the patients under their care. In essence, it can be deduced that nurses in Saudi Arabia serve as indispensable advocates

for patients, ensuring that their rights, safety, and overall well-being are given the utmost priority and attention within the complex and dynamic healthcare settings of the region [24-26]

CONCLUSION:

The multifaceted roles and responsibilities of nurses within the healthcare landscape of Saudi Arabia are undeniably pivotal and indispensable. From providing patient-centered care to advocating for patient rights, from collaborating within interdisciplinary teams to meticulously maintaining patient records, nurses play a fundamental role in ensuring the delivery of high-quality healthcare services. Through their adept adaptation to technological advancements, active participation in patient assessment and monitoring, and unwavering commitment to infection control and safety measures, nurses uphold standards of excellence in patient care and contribute significantly to positive healthcare outcomes.

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