

043: EFFECTS OF NURSE STAFFING ON PATIENT OUTCOMES IN TAIWAN

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Objective:

To examine the effect of nurse staffing variables: daily average hours of care, ratio of RNs to average patient census, skill mix and workload on patient outcomes as measured by five adverse occurrences. The adverse occurrences included unit rates of patient falls, pressure ulcers, respiratory and urinary tract infections as well as patient/family complaints.

Methods:

Measuring variables were using consistently available data from each month of the fiscal year 2000, from 21 medical-surgical nursing care units in a 1394-bed medical center in Taiwan. Data were analyzed by descriptive and multivariate inferential statistics, while controlling for patient acuity level.

Results:

a) Workload of nurses is the most powerful predictor on nosocomial infections ($R^2 = 0.486$) and patient falls ($R^2 = 0.303$).

b) Lower adverse outcome rates more consistently related to a higher proportion of N3 level of RNs.

c) Patient progress could be improved when RNs play a significant role in the staffing mix.

Conclusions:

Nurse staffing patterns and workload were related to the quality of nursing care provided.