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Improving the quality and efficacy of nursing handover in an ICU by using ISBAR

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Introduction: Nursing handover is a critical component of health-care quality and safety. According to WHO and JCI, 2007, a handover is the process of passing patient-specific information from one caregiver to another for the purpose of ensuring patient care continuity and safety. According to Riegel, 2005, nursing handover is a system of nurse-to-nurse communication between shift changes intended to transfer essential information for safe, holistic care of patients. The nursing handover process is considered to be a crucial part of providing quality care in a modern healthcare environment (Pothier et al. 2005) and the quality of a report given may delay an individual nurse's ability to provide care for up to 1 to 2 hours (Hansten, 2003). ISBAR is a structured method for communicating critical information that requires immediate attention and action contributing to effective escalation and increased patient safety. ISBAR can also be used effectively to enhance handovers between shifts or between staff in the same or different clinical areas.

Purpose: The purpose of this study was to assess, how ISBAR can help in improving the quality and efficacy of handover in an ICU?

Method: A systematic review of research articles from 2009-2016 was performed.

Result: Good nursing handover is vital to protect patient safety and provide quality care. Systems need to be put in place to enable and facilitate handovers. Using ISBAR can help in managing information and deliver safe handovers. Its implementation can reduce errors significantly and improve patient outcomes.