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A unique nursing role: Transport clinician

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As early as the 1960's, neonatal transport teams were utilized to make intensive care accessible to those newborns that needed it. As a result, the need for organized emergency neonatal transport systems evolved to include critically ill paediatric patients to become an integral part of the highly regionalized health care system in Ontario, Canada. The unique and dynamic nature of transport medicine has created an integral role for nurses as transport clinicians. During critical care transports, patient outcomes are directly influenced by a multitude of decisions regarding assessment, resuscitation, stabilization, and clinical judgment while navigating changing transport environments. The Acute Care Transport Service (ACTS) is responsible for the stabilization and safe transport of acutely ill, unstable neonatal and paediatric patients from the ages of 1 to 12 years. Following the completion of a rigorous education program and successful evaluation of skills and abilities based on the Canadian neonatal and paediatric critical care transport competencies, nurses are certified as transport clinicians. The transport competency profile is comprised of seven categories: professional responsibilities, communication, health & safety, assessment and diagnostics, therapeutics, integration, and transportation. As transport clinicians, nurses develop clinical proficiency in peripheral intravenous and artery line insertion, umbilical venous and arterial line insertion, needle thoracentesis, chest tube insertion, airway management including intubation and ventilation strategies. Nursing practice and interventions are delegated through the use of medical directives and on-line staff physician support.

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