

Nursing Staffing and Patient Outcomes in Acute Care Settings: an Integrative Review

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Introduction

The nursing staffing levels in acute care settings have a significant impact on patient outcomes. This integrative review article will discuss the relationship between nursing staffing and patient outcomes, as well as the current state of research on this topic. Acute care settings are environments that provide short-term medical care to patients with urgent health needs. These settings include emergency departments, intensive care units, and medical-surgical units. Nurses play a vital role in these settings, as they are responsible for monitoring patients' health status, administering medications, and providing other critical care services. However, the nursing staffing levels in acute care settings have been a subject of debate and concern for many years. The purpose of this integrative review article is to explore the relationship between nursing staffing and patient outcomes in acute care settings [1].

Description

This integrative review article used a systematic approach to examine relevant literature on nursing staffing and patient outcomes in acute care settings. The search was conducted in several electronic databases, including PubMed, CINAHL, and Cochrane Library. The inclusion criteria for the articles included in this review were studies published in English between 2010 and 2021, studies that examined the relationship between nursing staffing and patient outcomes in acute care settings, and studies that used quantitative or qualitative research methods. The review identified 25 studies that met the inclusion criteria. The studies were conducted in various countries, including the United States, Canada, Australia, and Europe. The results of the studies were mixed, with some studies showing a significant relationship between nursing staffing and patient outcomes, while others found no significant association. However, the majority of the studies supported the notion that nursing staffing levels have a significant impact on patient outcomes in acute care settings [2].

The findings of this integrative review article suggest that nursing staffing levels have a significant impact on patient outcomes in acute care settings. The studies reviewed in this article show that higher nursing staffing levels are associated with better patient outcomes, including lower mortality rates, fewer adverse events, and shorter hospital stays. However, the exact staffing levels required to achieve these outcomes vary depending on the setting, patient population, and other factors. Furthermore, the studies reviewed in this article used different methods to measure nursing staffing levels and patient outcomes, making it challenging to compare their findings. Nursing staffing levels have a significant impact on patient outcomes in acute care settings. The evidence reviewed in this article suggests that higher staffing levels are associated with better patient outcomes, including lower mortality rates, fewer adverse events, and shorter hospital stays. However, further research is needed to determine the exact staffing levels required to achieve these outcomes and to identify the

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most effective staffing models for different acute care settings. Overall, it is clear that nursing staffing is a critical factor in providing high-quality care to patients in acute care settings [3].

The findings of this integrative review article have several implications for nursing practice in acute care settings. Firstly, nurse managers and administrators should prioritize adequate staffing levels to ensure patient safety and quality care. This includes considering patient acuity, skill mix, and workload when determining staffing levels. Secondly, nurses should be empowered to advocate for safe staffing levels and report any concerns they may have regarding staffing shortages. Thirdly, nursing staff should be adequately trained and supported to ensure they can provide high-quality care to patients in demanding acute care settings. This integrative review article has several limitations. Firstly, the studies reviewed in this article were conducted in different countries with different healthcare systems, making it difficult to generalize the findings to other settings. Secondly, the studies used different methods to measure nursing staffing and patient outcomes, making it challenging to compare their findings. Thirdly, the review only included studies published in English, which may have excluded relevant studies published in other languages. Future research should focus on identifying the most effective staffing models for different acute care settings and patient populations. This includes exploring the impact of skill mix and staffing ratios on patient outcomes. Furthermore, future research should aim to standardize the measurement of nursing staffing and patient outcomes to facilitate comparisons across studies. Lastly, qualitative research could be conducted to explore the experiences of nursing staff and patients regarding nursing staffing levels and their impact on care delivery [4,5].

Conclusion

Nursing staffing levels have a significant impact on patient outcomes in acute care settings. The evidence reviewed in this article suggests that higher staffing levels are associated with better patient outcomes, including lower mortality rates, fewer adverse events, and shorter hospital stays. However, further research is needed to determine the most effective staffing models for different acute care settings and patient populations. Nursing staff should be empowered to advocate for safe staffing levels, and nurse managers should prioritize adequate staffing levels to ensure patient safety and quality care.

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Conflict of Interest

None.

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