Nurses’ Perceptions of Effective Delegation in the Acute Care Setting

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Background
Delegation is key for nurses as it lessens the burden of care demand of an increasingly complex patient population. Gaining insight into the nurses’ perceptions of his or her ability to effectively delegate has the potential to impact teamwork between the nurse and nursing assistant, as well as the delivery of safe, quality nursing care.

Purpose
To identify nurses’ perceptions of ability to effectively delegate to nursing assistants in the acute inpatient hospital setting.

Research Questions
- What are nurses’ perceptions of effective delegation and how delegation relates to teamwork between the nurse and nursing assistant?
- Is there a perception of increased confidence in delegation based on the nurse’s years of experience?

Methodology
Study Approval
- University of Mount Olive Institutional Review Board
- Duke University Health System Institutional Review Board

Study Design
- Qualitative, Non-Experimental
- Grounded Theory
- Semi-structured, face-to-face interviews
- Interview questions were based on themes identified in the literature review
  - Delegation
  - Preparedness for delegation
  - Confidence in delegation
  - Delegation skills
  - Teamwork

Data Collection
- Recruitment site: Duke Regional Hospital
- Recruitment population: Registered Nurses on the Inpatient General Surgery Unit
- Registered Nurses on the Inpatient Rehabilitation Unit
- Sample: Purposive sampling
- Approximately 40 nurses were recruited to participate with a total of 10 participants completing the study.
- Recruitment achieved through flyers and an email invitation.

Data Analysis
- Reflexive notes taken during interviews.
- Transcription of audio recording verbatim to validate themes/categories.

Findings
- Nurses felt they were confident in delegating tasks to the nursing assistants, but did not feel they were effective delegators.
- The nurse’s years of experience did not impact the perceived level of confidence in delegating tasks to the nursing assistant.
- Communication is essential to effective delegation.
- Nurses do not proactively delegate tasks to the nursing assistant.
- Effective delegation impacts teamwork between the nurse and nursing assistant.
- Regardless of years of experience, nurses need more training/education about how to effectively delegate.

Implications for Nursing Practice
- Synthesis of data collected in this study followed the analytic method of Glaser and Strauss.
- Review reflexive notes and audio recordings to identify themes/categories.
- Transcription of audio recording verbatim to validate themes/categories.
- Each transcription was reviewed for individual uniqueness and clustered themes.
- Constant comparison method of analysis to identify meaningful concepts using a two-dimensional matrix.

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References
Available upon request