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Experiences of Nurses Working in a Triage Area: An Integrative Review

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Purpose: To review the literature on triage nurses' experiences in hospital emergency departments (EDs).

Design: A review of primary-research papers published between 2008 and 2018 is presented that answers the research question: what are the nurses' experiences in the triage area?

Methods: A systematic search was performed across seven databases: PubMed, Embase, Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health Literature (CINAHL), PsycINFO, Cochrane, ProQuest, and Scopus. The search was then conducted through PubMed using Boolean operators with the following key terms and their related search terms to further expand the search: "Nurses", "Triage", and "Experiences" and "Emergency Department". A total of 38 articles were evaluated with the Joanna Briggs Institute (JBI) critical appraisal tools for quantitative and qualitative studies to ensure that only studies of sufficiently acceptable methodologies were subjected to analysis (Campbell & Ding, 2015). Articles that were included in the literature review, comprise of 20 qualitative studies, 16 quantitative studies, and 2 mixed-method studies.

Results: The findings of the 38 full-text articles were categorized into three major themes on experiences: (1) making judgments, (2) service delivery, and (3) effective communication. The themes identified supported the findings that triage is a complex process that involves decision-making and inter-professional communication. Results from the review suggested that triage nurses need to make judgments, consider factors affecting service delivery, and have effective communication which is central to triaging.

Conclusion:

The existing literature has explored all possible dimensions of triage nurses' experiences and it is evident that efficiency, timeliness, professionalism, and fairness guide the work ethics and processes of triage nurses. Triage nurses' experiences revolve around decision-making and communication. Decision-making involves a complex interplay of work experience, guidelines, clinical acumen and the work environment. Proper communication is essential during the triage process. Triage nurses have also been reported to encounter demanding and violent patients, as well as the regular influx of non-urgent cases. Findings from this review suggested that the role of triage nurses in primary care is complex and difficult. More support is needed to empower and help them cope with the challenges of triage work.

Title:

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Keywords:

Emergency department, Experience and Triage

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Abstract Summary:

The purpose of this review is to explore the understanding of triage nurses' experiences in hospital emergency departments (EDs). An Integrative review of the Literature is done to help the team to understand this phenomenon.

Content Outline:

Purpose: To review the literature on triage nurses' experiences in hospital emergency departments (EDs).

Design: A review of primary-research papers published between 2008 and 2018 is presented that answers the research question: what are the nurses' experiences in the triage area?

Methods: A systematic search was performed across seven databases: PubMed, Embase, Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health Literature (CINAHL), PsycINFO, Cochrane, ProQuest, and Scopus. 38 articles were evaluated with the Joanna Briggs Institute (JBI) critical appraisal tools for quantitative and qualitative studies to ensure that only studies of sufficiently acceptable methodologies were subjected to analysis (Campbell & Ding, 2015). Articles that were included in the literature review, comprise of 20 qualitative studies, 16 quantitative studies, and 2 mixed-method studies.

Results: Triage is a complex process that involves decision-making and inter-professional communication. Results from the review suggested that triage nurses need to make judgments, consider factors affecting service delivery, and have effective communication which is central to triaging.

Conclusion: Decision-making is contextual and requires good judgment from nurses. In order to have effective care delivery, nurses need to have effective communication both with fellow health-care personnel and with patients and their caregivers.

Clinical Relevance: Findings from this review suggested that the role of triage nurses in primary care is complex and difficult. More support is needed to empower and help them cope with the challenges of triage work.

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