

Nursing Self-Care: Current Evidence and Implementation Strategies for Improving Patient Outcomes and Nurse Well-Being

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GOAL:

To examine the effect of nursing self-care behaviors on patients' satisfaction with the care received.

PICOT ?

In nurses, how does participating in self-care activities verses not participating in self-care activities affect nurse wellbeing and patient satisfaction during a hospital stay?

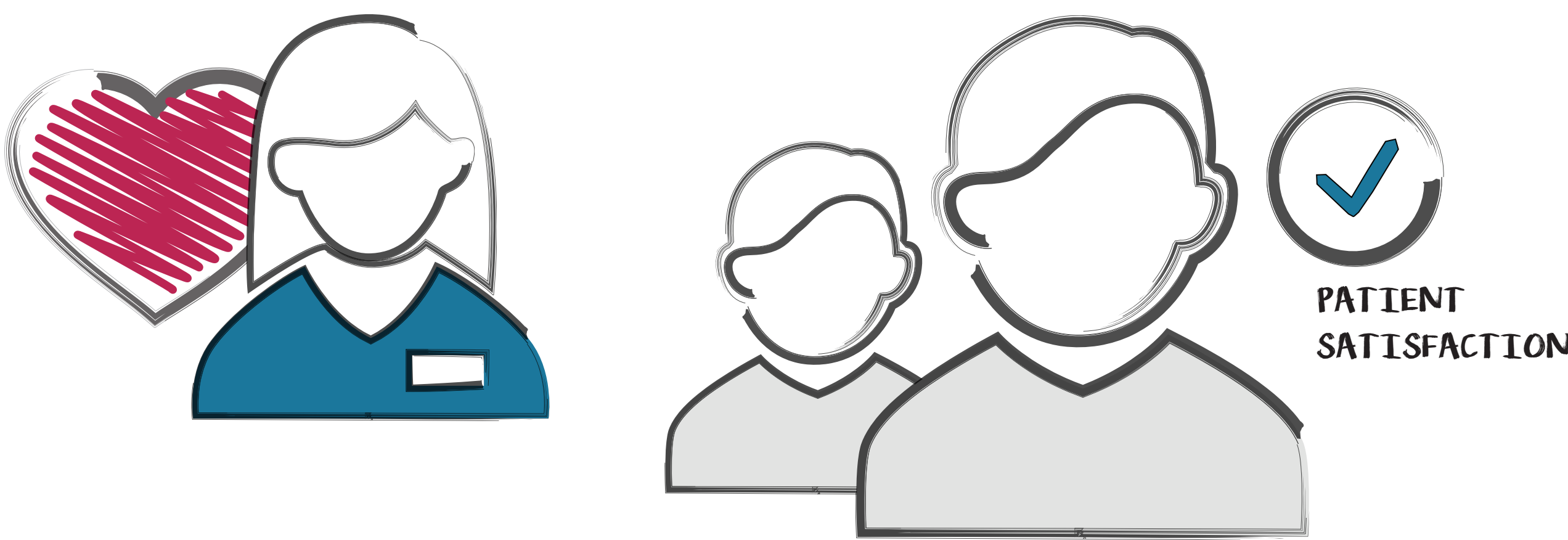
Nursing, specifically the health care environment and patient care, contributes to increased stress. Frequent self-care behavior can facilitate stress reduction. High levels of stress were observed in step-down units due to high patient acuity, staff shortages, and alarm fatigue. Research shows that nurse stress negatively impacts a patient's level of care and overall satisfaction. Unit nurses reported low levels of self-care and an inability to participate in hospital self-care programs due to high workloads (Poghosyan et al, 2010).

EVIDENCE

- The top health and safety concern among nurses are the acute and chronic effects of stress and overwork. (ANA Health and Safety Survey, 2016).
- Nurses who work with pain or depression reported more medication errors, patient falls and provided a lower quality of care (Levtak, Ruhm, & Gupta, 2014).
- Compared to a national rate of 9%, hospital-employed bedside nurses have a 17% depression rate (Levtak, Ruhm, & McCoy, 2012).
- On-site wellness programs, offering Tai-Chi, fitness classes, ergonomic training programs, massage, CBT programs, and grief debriefing, significantly improve nurse health (Letvak, 2013).
- Attending Schwartz Center Rounds has shown to significantly reduce providers' perceived stress and increase ability to cope with psychosocial and emotional demands (Lown & Manning, 2010).
- Nurses who report a high level of burnout are more likely to report their quality of care for patients as fair or poor (Poghosyan et al, 2010).
- Heavy nurse workloads are associated with poor nurse-patient communication, decreased job satisfaction and job performance, increased stress, and burnout (Stafseth, Solms & Bredal, 2011).

NATIONAL STANDARDS

- American Nurses Association (ANA) defines a healthy nurse as actively focusing on creating and maintaining a balance of physical, intellectual, emotional, social, spiritual, personal, and professional well-being. (Healthy Nurse, Healthy Nation, 2016).
- The National Database of Nursing Quality Indicators (NDNQI) evaluates nursing care at the unit level in areas of structure, process, and outcomes. Nursing self-care should be included in the NDNQI report as it is a vital component of patient outcomes and satisfaction.
- Outside of the ANA's encouragement of self-care activities among nurses, currently there is not a regulated standard for nursing self-care.



PREVALENCE & IMPACT

Poor self-care among nurses is a prevalent issue in healthcare. A lack of self-care contributes to increased stress, which negatively impacts patient care in a multitude of ways including:

- Increased stress levels contribute to burnout. Burnout can lead to compassion fatigue, disengagement and lack of motivation; all of which can negatively impact patient satisfaction.
- Nurses not participating in self-care report higher rates of patient errors and deteriorating work conditions. Issues included mandatory overtime, high patient ratios, and staffing issues, making self-care challenging (ANA, 2011).
- Patient satisfaction is a quality indicator directly impacting reimbursement from private insurance, Medicare, and Medicaid, with 30% of reimbursement determined by the HCHAPS Survey (Guadagnino, 2012).
- Hospitals and nursing managers who promote self-care behaviors for staff, as a means of personal empowerment, report fewer falls and nurse-assessed risks (Purdy et al, 2010).
- High levels of self-care have the potential to increase nurse satisfaction, improve quality of patient care and outcomes, which may increase patient satisfaction.

MEASUREMENT OF OUTCOMES

- Pre-intervention and post-intervention questionnaires will measure multiple areas of interest.
- Nursing questionnaires will focus on:
  - ✓ Level of individual/unit stress
  - ✓ Compassion fatigue
  - ✓ Feelings of burnout
  - ✓ Awareness of mind and body
  - ✓ Perceived patient compassion satisfaction
  - ✓ Commitment to intervention training
  - ✓ Feelings of work satisfaction
  - ✓ Overall health impact
- Patient questionnaires will focus on:
  - ✓ Perception of nurse's compassion
  - ✓ Quality of care delivered by nurse
  - ✓ Level of comfort received
  - ✓ Patient's perceived importance to nursing staff
  - ✓ Overall quality of care delivered by unit
- All areas will be assessed on a 5 point Likert-scale.
- Questionnaires will be analyzed to determine if the implemented strategies increase patient satisfaction and quality of self-care behaviors in nurses.

STRATEGY

Medical centers will implement the following actions to increase nursing self-care behavior and improve patient satisfaction and outcomes:

- To establish self-care behaviors earlier and promote general wellness, nursing curriculum will require at least 4 courses focused on teaching self-care. Faculty will incorporate self-care lessons and activities into the general coursework and clinical environment.
- New medical center orientees will participate in a 6-week stress management training course. Course goals include gaining knowledge and increasing coping skills to deal with health care situations including:
  - ✓ Patient death
  - ✓ Negative patient-provider interaction
  - ✓ Management of mass casualty events
  - ✓ Personal-professional value conflict related to patient care
  - ✓ Review of all available resources to cope with the demands of nursing
- Nurse managers will meet quarterly with each nurse one-on-one to facilitate communication. This promotes a safe environment to express concerns and fosters positive working relationships.
- To prevent burnout and improve patient care, hospitals will implement on-site programs designed to combat work-related stress and promote general wellness. Lunch and Learns, fitness classes, aromatherapy, and massage are popular, evidence-based interventions.
- Each unit will have a dedicated space to promote relaxation, offering stress-reduction activities, geared toward meeting the specific needs of the unit.
- Use of The Schwartz Rounds will enhance communication within the patient-provider relationship and promote a sense of personal support for staff. The Rounds consist of a one-hour, case-based interactive discussion led by a professional facilitator. Session frequency will increase to twice per month.
- To promote general wellness, each unit will maintain a supply of fresh fruit and vegetables for snacking or smoothies.
- Medical centers will offer flexible, regularly scheduled self-care activities on a drop-in basis to meet the challenges of the bedside nurses' unpredictable schedule.

Once in the work-force, nurses need the continued support of nursing managers and hospital administrators to ensure self-care is incorporated into the working environment. Adequate staffing support programs, activities providing opportunities for self-care, and a culture which values wellness will aide in increasing self-care behaviors, and ultimately provide the highest level of care and satisfaction for patients.

Nursing self-care plays a crucial role in patient safety, positive working environments, and patient satisfaction. all of which lead to higher reimbursement and staff satisfaction. Self-care is a skill which must be introduced early, and cultivated throughout one's nursing career. To achieve this, nursing curriculum should include self-care coursework.