

**Title:**

An Exploration of Nurses' Perceptions of Unfinished Nursing Care

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**Session Title:**

Scientific Posters Session 2

**Keywords:**

Unfinished nursing care, acute care setting and nurse work environment

**References:**

Jones, T. L., Hamilton, P., & Murry, N. (2015, June). Unfinished nursing care, missed care, and implicitly rationed care: State of the science review. *International Journal of Nursing Studies*, 52(6), 1121-1137. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.ijnurstu.2015.02.012>

VanFosson, C. A., Jones, T. L., & Yoder, L. H. (2016, March-April). Unfinished nursing care: An important performance measure for nursing care systems. *Nursing Outlook*, 64(2), 124-136. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.outlook.2015.12.010>

**Abstract Summary:**

Using the conceptual framework: implicit rationing of care, this pilot study explores the perceptions of acute-care registered nurses regarding their experience with unfinished nursing care.

**Learning Activity:**

LEARNING OBJECTIVES	EXPANDED CONTENT OUTLINE
The learner will be able to discuss the concept of unfinished nursing care.	A definition from the literature will be provided: “Unfinished care is conceptualized as a three-pronged phenomenon consisting of a problem (resource/time scarcity), a process (clinical decision making to prioritized and ration care), and an outcome (care left undone)”
The learner will be able to identify components of unfinished nursing care as identified by acute care nurses	Data from the pilot study will be provided.

**Abstract Text:**

Unfinished nursing care exists within today’s acute care setting and impacts both patients and nurses. “Unfinished care is conceptualized as a three-pronged phenomenon consisting of a problem (resource/time scarcity), a process (clinical decision making to prioritized and ration care), and an outcome (care left undone)” (Jones, Hamilton, & Murry, 2015, p. 1122). The concept of unfinished care and related concepts has been documented in the literature for almost two decades. Researchers have examined the concept of unfinished care or the omission of care within the acute-care setting and what impacts this has on patients, staff, and organizational outcomes. The purpose of this pilot study is to explore the perceptions of acute-care registered nurses regarding their experience with unfinished

nursing care. Using an ethnographic approach, four nurses working in an acute care hospital setting were interviewed during November and December 2016. Interviews were recorded and transcribed. The researcher aims to explore the pilot study findings concerning nurses' perceptions of unfinished nursing care and their potential relationship to the components within the conceptual framework: Implicit Rationing of Care in which the individual nurse characteristics, the unit dynamics, and system culture all interact together and potentially contribute to the approach the nurse uses in the overall care of the patient. Coding and analysis of the interviews are therefore being guided by this conceptual framework. The author's preliminary findings suggest rationing of care continues to be pertinent in today's acute care setting with elements of the four interviews falling within each component of the framework. With these early findings, the author categorizes most of the nurses' thoughts and comments into the nurse work environment and philosophy of care sections. The following powerful comment depicts the profound struggles facing nurses in the acute care setting: "I think the biggest thing in regards to finishing tasks is mostly gonna be – at least for me and for my unit the biggest barrier that I have is just based on patient ratios. If you have one of those days that you are maxed out on patients and it's a very high acuity load, there's sometimes you just don't have enough help or you don't have enough staff on the floor in general and you're overwhelmed and everyone's overwhelmed". Final results of this pilot study will be available in Spring 2017.