



Why Nursing Experience is Crucial to Patient Safety

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5 Acute Care

Introduction

To spark our interest in this project, as novice nurses, we observed a high percentage of co-workers on 5 Acute Care to have less than 2 years RN experience. This questioned the safety of our patients on a daily basis. Therefore, the purpose of this project was to explore the impact nursing experience has on patient safety. A literature review was conducted to research current evidence on this topic. Additionally, hospital wide data was collected through unit specific seniority lists and patient safety measures.

PICO

P: Acute Care Registered Nurses

I: Increasing Nursing Experience

C: High Amounts of Novice Nurses versus Expert Nurses

O: Patient Safety

Question: Does the amount of nursing experience on an acute care unit effect patient safety?

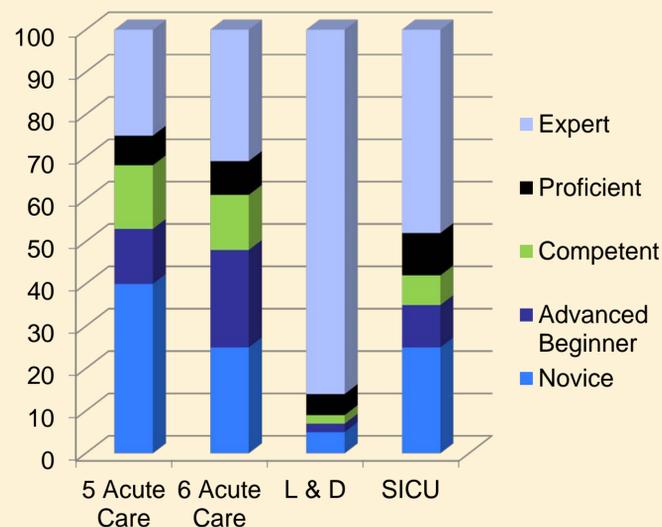
Methods

A literature review was conducted by searching PubMed and CINAHL to gather current research articles. Debbie Stoner, HMC System Analyst, provided SEIU Bargaining Unit Seniority lists for unit comparisons. Patient safety data was found by using Quality and Safety Goals/Dashboard.

Results

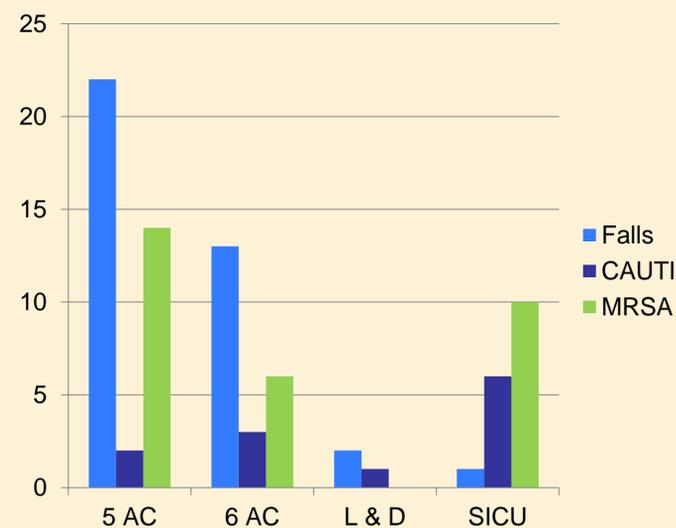
- Expert nurses versus Novice nurses
 - Tend to clarify concerns
 - Recognize anticipated versus unanticipated patient outcomes
 - Base decision making off patient history and clinical information
 - Less task focused
- How experience affects patient safety
 - NDNQI indicated that increase in experience increased quality indicator rates
 - Certifications lead to safer practices increasing patient safety

HMC Seniority Bar Graph



- Acute Care floors have higher percentage of novice and advanced beginner nurses than do specialized floors

Patient Safety Bar Graph



- Acute care floors have higher rates of MRSA conversions and falls as opposed to specialized units

Discussion

We found there to be a lack of experience on medical surgical acute care floors compared to specialized floors such as intensive care units. This finding was expected since many new nurses pursue jobs on med/surg floors for experience before transferring to a specialty unit. However, if there is a lack of nursing expertise in knowledge in a particular setting patient safety can be compromised. Therefore, it is imperative for institutions to develop incentives to increase nurse retention rates on acute care floors. What can HMC do to retain nurses and thereby increase nursing expertise on acute care floors to increase patient safety?

Recommendations

Due to variables that cannot be controlled and the nature of the study it is impossible to eliminate every variable that effects patient safety. Therefore, we were unable to draw a distinct correlation between nurse experience and patient safety. However, through our research there is evidence that supports a correlation between nurse experience and patient safety.

We recommend there to be incentives offered to med/surg nurses to encourage retention and foster floor morale. Some suggestions we found from surveying nurses on our floor included:

- Implementation of a more comfortable working environment
- Encouraging med/surg certification
- Increase staffing
- Communication

Nurse retention on acute care floors is essential to increase overall experience of staff. Nursing experience is a crucial element to patient safety.

References

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