

Step 1: Description

The overall experience at the outpatient clinic was great and I was able to have one on one interactions with many patients as I checked their vital signs. I was also able to give several injections and draw patient labs. There were several practices by the nurses that made me uneasy but the main thing was the lack of maintaining aseptic technique with patients and in-between patients. When prepping medications, the nurse did not clean the vial tops or draw up medications with gloves on. There was also a lack of hand hygiene before making contact with each patient or cleaning the patient bed after each patient used it. I played the role as the observer until I was offered the chance to give patient care and I took extra precautions in maintaining proper hand hygiene and use of gloves for the patients' safety.

Step 2: Feelings

In the beginning I thought the nurse just forgot to take the extra precautions of using gloves and sanitizer but after shadowing for the first few hours I realized it became apart of their nursing practice. During one of my opportunities to administer a medication, the patient had slightly leaned against the bed and as I placed my supplies down, I saw strands of hair that belonged to the previous patient and in that exact moment I felt so guilty and a bit embarrassed that it was more than obvious that the bed had not been sanitized before they entered the room. Another experience that affected my feelings was with a patient who I drew labs on. I am not sure of what their diagnoses was but the patient did not want to take off a jacket. I use therapeutic communication to help the patient understand the need to remove the jacket and it worked.

Step 3: Evaluation

My day at the outpatient clinic had many great events which allowed me to refresh my memory with nursing skills. The only bad thing about my experience was the lack of aseptic technique that I previously mentioned. I think the worst practice I observed was seeing a nurse transfer patient's urine from the cup into a tube without gloves and after labeling the tubes, they walked out without cleaning their hands and went directly to their desk to touch personal belongings. I know I probably overthought the amount of germs that transferred from one place to another due to my own views of interacting with body fluids but I was so bothered by it. My interaction with patients is what went well for me that day. I noticed how much I have personally grown with my comfort of walking into a room to talk to a patient without overthinking what I'm going to ask or say to them.

Step 4: Analysis

I am not sure if the situation is different compared to in hospital stays but I have learned the importance of maintaining aseptic technique to prevent spread of infections that could possibly be life threatening. Broader issues that can arise is spreading illnesses to different patients without knowing. Each time I came into contact with a patient I did use the hand sanitizer and gloves but if I didn't I could have easily come in contact with bodily fluids and I also came in contact with many patients glutes to administer medications. If I did the same techniques as the nurse I would have created an open opportunity for pathogens to be passed to another individual just by making person to person contact with them. One of my fellow classmates and I debriefed our days of the outpatient clinic after we both were able to gain our own experiences and we witnessed the same issues but with different nurses.

Step 5: Conclusion

In regards of patient safety I could have addressed my concerns with the nurse but I did not feel like it was my place to do so especially since I was given the opportunity to learn from faculty. One of the nurses had amazing patient communication skills and I observed so many interactions with different patients. They were extremely friendly and open with their personality and I learned that it is a good thing to allow your patients to get to know you as an individual. It creates a great nurse-patient relationship while also remaining professional in care.

Step 6: Action Plan

Overall my experience was knowledgeable in goods ways and came me future insight on my own nursing practices. I learned how in tuned I am with continuing good hand hygiene practice for the safety of my patients and outside of nursing care. I think the lack of aseptic technique may be due to what the patients are at the clinic for. They are not visiting because they need medication to take away a common cold or the flu but for different, help such as getting an injection in an area they are not able to reach or they are not comfortable with administering it to themselves at home. As for the lab part of my experience, I cannot think of a reason as to why gloves should not be used for each patient, especially since you're risk of coming in contact with blood is higher. I will use my experience to further improve my practice in the future by using therapeutic communication with all patients. I was not able to distinguish a single patients diagnose just by taking their vital signs and I used the same calm tone with every patient and I did not have a negative interaction with any of the patients.