Researcher: Hailey Goulas

PICOT Question:
Are nurses who have adequate education regarding environmental hazards, compared to nurses without adequate education, at less risk for injury related to exposure of environmental hazards?

Summary:
Personal protection and safety are vital during patient care for the Nurse and patient. In the healthcare field, Nurses are exposed to many toxins, injuries, and infectious disease daily that require the appropriate safety interventions to protect the Nurse and surrounding public. With an education on environmental hazards that Nurses are exposed to, this can increase patient care and decrease the spread of disease or prevent injury from occurring. "Growing awareness of environmental, occupational, and social determinants of health, and the need for appropriate interventions, offers an opportunity for student nurses trained in environmental and occupational health to expand patient care beyond its current parameters. Nursing practice must move from the long- established status quo toward educating on current and related safety and health issues, trends, and problems affected by environmental and occupational risks" (Mercado, 2022). Since the risk of injury is so high in the nursing profession, guidelines and regulations are in place for the safest practice to be delivered such as OSHA and American Nurses Association guidelines. "These include precautions to reduce the risk of exposure to pathogens that cause infectious diseases, handling patients safely to prevent injuries, and handling chemical substances with extreme caution" (Murphey, 2022). COVID-19 brought extreme awareness of protective measures to be instilled in the hospital and public setting. With education of precautions to protect the Nurse and public of COVID-19, the correct Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) must be worn. With the right education and background knowledge of protection from environmental hazards nurses are placed at a decreased risk for injury or illness. "Nurses are integral and essential contributors to the patient experience. Medical centers must prioritize the safety of nursing staff. It's necessary for nurses to speak out and speak up when they see workplace hazards that can impact patient care and their careers" (Massari, 2018). It is always important to not only advocate for patients but also for yourself when it comes to safety and potentially harmful situations. These interventions ultimately improve patient satisfaction and outcome of their care being delivered.

Conclusion:
In conclusion, research states that Nurses with an education on environmental hazards and safety precautions are at less risk for injury compared to nurses who do not have a background education in environmental hazards and safety precautions. "Providing environmental and occupational health education and promotion establishes nursing competency to address health risks that surpass conventional care" (Mercado, 2022). Something that can benefit the profession is ongoing education about protective measures and safe practice to prevent injury to the Nurse and patient. The more education provided, such as safe medication handling, disease precautions, proper body mechanics and exposure to radiation or chemotherapy can not only benefit the Nurses knowledge but the patient's safety as well.

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