

Unit 1: Overview of Critical Care Nursing

ONLINE CONTENT (1H)

Unit Objectives:

- Select appropriate nursing interventions to manage common problems and needs of critically ill patients. (1,6,)*
- Develop strategies to manage issues related to caregivers of critically ill patients. (1,2,6)*
- Apply the principles of hemodynamic monitoring to the nursing and interprofessional management of patients receiving monitoring. (1,2,6,7)*

*Course Objectives

Assignment:

Review- Unit 1: Overview of Critical Care Nursing PowerPoint.
Read the case study, then answer the case study questions below.

CASE STUDY

- ▶ Margaret Mayfield is a 62 year old female who has been admitted from the ED to the critical care unit, after calling 911 due to severe fatigue, weakness, and fever. Her past medical history includes: dwarfism, HTN, hyperlipidemia, diabetes mellitus, and has a chronic Foley catheter due to urinary retention. She lives alone in an apartment and has no family members. Her friend is her POA for healthcare, and is the only contact listed. She has a home health aide visit once a week to assist her with bathing and all of her meals are delivered from local take-out restaurants. She utilizes a walker at home, however reports she hasn't been out of bed for the last several days due to weakness and fever. She uses a private ambulance service to go to physician appointments; this is the only time she gets out of her apartment for the last three years. Home medications include carvedilol, simvastatin, aspirin, and insulin. She does not have her medications with her and does not know the doses.

Case Study Questions

- ▶ As the critical care nurse caring for her, what overall concerns do you have?
The first concern I have for Margaret is her current disease process. I am concerned with her having a fever and having a chronic foley that she could have a UTI and potentially be septic. I also find it concerning that she lives at home alone and has no family. In addition, I would screen her for depression due to the lack of support persons she has and that she rarely leaves the house.
- ▶ Describe ways in which you would communicate with her and her POA for healthcare. Include what topics you would discuss at this time in her hospitalization.
I would communicate with Margaret and her POA regarding her care. I would ensure that the POA understands that while Margaret is alert and oriented, she is still able to make her own decisions regarding her care. Topics I would cover include updates on her current illness and safety in her home. I would discuss her home medications and new medications she is receiving in the hospital. I would also like to talk to her about coping mechanisms she uses for any potential feelings of loneliness and stress.
- ▶ Discuss the ethical issues this case presents.
Maintaining Margaret's autonomy may present an issue. As an older adult female with medical conditions, including dwarfism, some may not respect Margaret's ability to make her own decisions about her care. It is important, however, that Margaret is respected and given the freedom to make her own choices. Confidentiality may present as another ethical issue. While Margaret is still mentally capable, we must still get her permission to inform her POA of her medical care. If Margaret is no longer capable of making her own decisions, her POA should only be presented with medical information that is necessary to make decisions.
- ▶ Discuss the legal issues this case presents.
A potential legal issue could present if Margaret's POA wants to make medical decisions for Margaret. This could include treatments, resuscitation status, and living arrangements. While Margaret is still mentally capable to make her own decisions, her POA does not have the authority to make medical care. Her POA is welcomed to act as a support person and advocate for Margaret at this time.
- ▶ In what ways will you serve as an advocate for Margaret?

I want to advocate for Margaret in a way that respects her wishes and promotes her safety. Independence, such as staying in her own home, may be of importance to her. I want to do my best to ensure that Margaret maintains her self-worth. As her nurse, I also need to advocate for her safety. If it is unsafe for her to return home, I want to promote resources that will improve her safety and quality of living. In doing this, I will keep her wishes at the forefront. In addition, I will advocate for Margaret to feel comfortable making her own decisions as she is still alert and oriented.

▶ What other departments would you involve in her care, and why?

I would involve case management in Margaret's care as they are great at solving problems due to social determinants of health. If Margaret needs placement in an assisted living facility, case management will be able to help with this. I may also consult with pharmacy to help Margaret understand her medications and doses better.

Place your answers to these questions in the “Unit 1: Overview CC dropbox” by **1/8/2025 at 0800**. Be prepared to share and discuss your thoughts in class.

In order to receive full credit (1 hour class time) for this assignment, it must be completed in its entirety by the due date/time assigned. Any assignments not completed in its entirety will result in missed class time and must be completed by the end of the semester to pass the course.